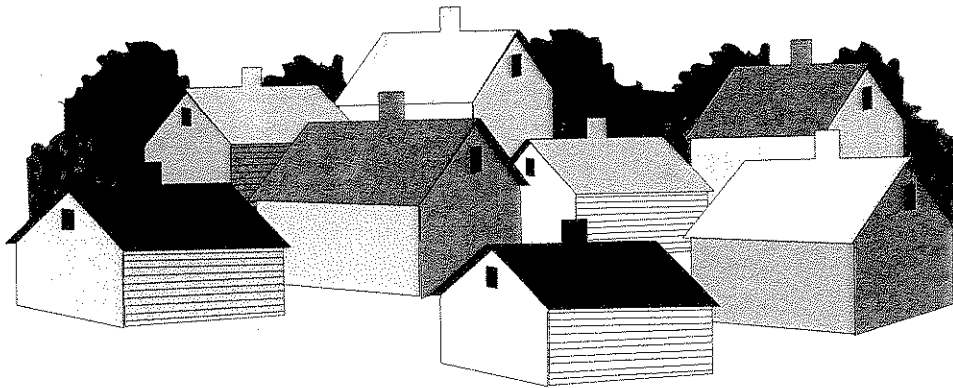


CITY OF
BLYTHE
CALIFORNIA



HOUSING ELEMENT

For the Current Planning Period

November, 2004

City of Blythe
Comprehensive General Plan
Housing Element

November, 2004

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Glossary of Abbreviations

ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
COB	City of Blythe
CAC	Community Access Center
CAL-LIHEAP	California Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program
CCRC	California Community Reinvestment Corporation
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CHAFA	California Housing Finance Agency
CVAG	Coachella Valley Association of Governments
CVHC	Coachella Valley Housing Coalition
CRAC	Colorado River Action Council
CSD	California Department of Community Services and Development
DACE	Desert Alliance for Community Empowerment
DOE-LIWA	The Energy Low-Income Weatherization Assistance Program
DOF	California Department of Finance
DSD	Development Services Department
EDA	Economic Development Agency of Riverside County
EHAP	Emergency Housing Assistance Program
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Administration
HCD	California Department of Housing and Community Development
HELP	Housing Enabled by Local Partnerships
HUD	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
LIHEA	Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program
LIHPRHA	Low Income Housing Preservation and Resident Home Ownership Act
LMIHF	Low and Moderate Income Set Aside Funds
LIHTC	Low Income Housing Tax Credit
MWD	Metropolitan Water District of Southern California
PRC	Project Review Committee
PVID	Palo Verde Irrigation District
RHC	Rancho Housing Alliance
RACS	Richard Allen Community Services
RHNA	Regional Housing Needs Assessment
RDA	City of Blythe Redevelopment Agency
SCAG	Southern California Association of Governments
SSI	Supplemental Social Security Insurance

Chapter 1: Introduction

A. Purpose

Housing is one of seven mandatory elements that comprise the general plan every California City and county is required to prepare. Whereas the other six elements need to be updated on an "as needed" basis only, state law requires that the housing element be updated every five years.¹

The housing element describes housing needs and sets forth goals and implementation measures to address the identified housing needs. It also describes the community's program to utilize private and public funding sources that are to be used in meeting its goal of providing decent affordable housing to City residents within the framework outlined by the General Plan.

The housing element is required to be consistent, and integrated with, the other General Plan Elements (See Chapter 5, p. 52-53). State law also requires that local governments cooperatively address regional housing needs. Specifically, each local government is required to shoulder a specific amount of the estimated statewide housing need. (See below)

The housing element consists of two components:

- A comprehensive analysis of local housing needs that includes:
 - population, employment trends and other relevant demographic factors;
 - documentation of various household characteristics including a look at housing affordability based on household income and size;
 - an assessment of special needs groups including farmworkers, seniors and the homeless;
 - governmental and non-governmental constraints to meeting housing needs; and,
 - an assessment of how effectively the previous housing element fulfilled the goals it set forth for the previous planning period.
- A pro-active action plan to address the housing needs of all segments of the population. Although housing elements generally also identify the housing needs of households with above moderate incomes, the predominant thrust of the action plan is to address the needs of very low, low and moderate income households.

In the case of the City of Blythe (COB) particular emphasis is put on the needs of those in the very low and low income category. Their housing needs are often under served by the supply and demand mechanisms of the free market, necessitating innovative public programs to assure that their housing needs are met.

B. Income Categories

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has established household income categories based on a percentage of median county income. (See Table 1-1) The income figures associated with each category are updated annually based on estimated annual changes in the county's median income level.

Table 1-1
Income Categories as a Percentage of Median County Income

Income Category	Percentage of Median Income
Very Low-Income	Below 50% of median income
Low-Income	51%-80% of median income
Moderate-Income	81-120% of median income
Above Moderate-Income	Above 120% of median income

Source: HUD

Table 1-2 summarizes HUD's determination of the upper income limits for Riverside County for very low income through moderate income households of various sizes. These income limits are based on an estimated overall Riverside County median income of \$50,300 for a four person household; from this figure a formula is applied to calculate the median income for various other household sizes. The median income for various sized households is also shown in Table 1-2; all figures in Table 1-2 are based on estimates established by HUD.

Related to this discussion, it should be noted that Census 2000 pegs Riverside County medium household income at \$42,887 and the City of Blythe's medium household income at \$35,324. This means that Blythe's household medium income as defined by Census 2000 is: a) 18% lower than the County's medium household income as measured by the Census 2000 and b) 30% lower than County's medium household income as measured by HUD. Hence, a four person household that had an income of \$37,100 would by HUD standards be classified as low income even though the household's income exceeds (by almost \$2,000) Blythe's medium household income as defined by Census 2000.

Table 1-2
Riverside County (HUD) Estimated
Upper Income Limits by Household Size, January 2002

Income Category	Number of Persons in Family							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Very low	17600	20100	22650	25150	27150	29150	31200	33200
Low	28150	32200	36200	40250	43450	46700	49900	53100
Moderate	42250	48300	54300	60350	65200	70000	74850	79650
Median	35200	40250	45250	50300	54300	58350	62350	66400

Source: HUD

C. Regional Housing Needs Determination

State legislation enacted in 1980 requires the determination of regional and local housing needs for persons of all income levels. Census figures as well as annual income and population estimates and projections by the California Department of Finance (DOF) are utilized as baseline data by the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) to determine the state's need for additional annual housing in each region. Also taken into consideration are such factors as market demand for housing, employment opportunities, land availability, commuting patterns, type and tenure of housing and the housing vacancy rate.

Based on HCD determination of regional housing need, The Southern California Council of Governments (SCAG), the regional association of governments that includes the City of Blythe, is responsible for assigning the amount of increased housing that each local unit of government within its region is expected to provide.ⁱⁱ This construction need is referred to as the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) numbers. State law requires local jurisdictions to make a sustained and serious attempt to plan for the construction need assigned to them.

Although SCAG, as the regional association of governments, assigns the RHNA numbers, the COB is also a member of the Coachella Valley Association of Governments (CVAG), the sub-regional association. CVAG and the City of Blythe, as a member city, works cooperatively in meeting their housing needs.

SCAG assigns the RHNA numbers for the sub-region that includes Blythe. The construction need for Blythe, therefore, fulfills a portion of the total construction need that has been assigned for the sub-region. Table 1-3 summarizes the respective construction needs for the City of Blythe and the sub-region from 1998-2005. Table 1-4 summarizes the annualized construction need in each income category for Blythe.

Table 1-3
Construction Need Identified for Coachella Valley Sub-Region Including Blythe

	Blythe	Coachella Valley/Blythe	Blythe's % of Sub-Region's Total
Total construction need	853	20,868	4%

Table I-4
**City of Blythe Annual and Aggregate Construction Need via Income Category
 1998-2005 Planning Period**

	<u>Income Level</u>				
	Very low	Low	Moderate	Above Moderate	Total
Annual Need	31	18	23	42	114
Aggregate Need	234	137	166	316	853
Percentage	27%	16%	20%	37%	100%

The 853 unit aggregate construction need identified for Blythe translates into an annualized need of 114 units. At least 75% of the need must be met via new construction; the other 25% can be met via rehabilitation and/or conservation of existing units. Therefore, total construction need equals the sum of:

- newly constructed units; and
- existing units that are either conserved or rehabilitated as defined by specific state statutes.

Governmental Code Section 65584 (c) gives all cities and counties 90 days to review and revise the determinations issued by SCAG. The City of Blythe began the process of appealing the construction need that was assigned to it. Blythe's appeal was based on the contentions that there had been little growth in the permanent household population within the present city limits during the last planning period and that little is expected during the present planning period.

Blythe was one of two cities within the SCAG region whose appeal was considered valid enough to merit a hearing. However, if the appeal had been successful any reduction in Blythe's construction need would have been added to that of other CVAG member cities.

Not wanting to win its case at the expense of its partners in this association, the City of Blythe, therefore, chose to discontinue its appeal. Chapter VII outlines the COB's pro-active strategy to achieve its assigned construction need. Currently, Blythe is party to a lawsuit filed by SCAG that addresses this same basic concern regarding HCD housing needs determinations.

D. Citizen and Local Participation

To ensure that the most accurate data regarding particularly lower income and special needs groups has been obtained, extensive interviewing of service providers to these groups has been conducted. The City of Blythe increased its household population by about 1/3 due to annexation since the 1990 Census.

The COB Development Services has also identified those groups whose housing needs are most underserved and has taken the initiative to mobilize service providers and interested citizens to partner in finding solutions to meeting the housing needs. The first attempt at this was a Homeless Continuum of Care process, which the City initiated in conjunction with the Riverside County Homeless program in the summer of 2000; periodic follow up meeting have held approximately every three months. This process has yielded valuable input on the needs of various homeless and at risk special needs groups and has resulted in successful grant applications for EHAP capitol and operational grants for an Emergency Homeless Shelter. (See Chapter 4 and Program 31)

Modeled upon the Continuum of Care approach, Development Services has hosted a continuing series Blythe Area Housing Summit in conjunction with the Desert Alliance for Communities Empowerment (DACE) , which services the nearby unincorporated desert areas, including the communities of Ripley and Mesa Verde. (Note: Much but not all of these unincorporated areas are within the City sphere of influence, including Mesa Verde, which is also now within the project area of the Blythe RDA.) Thus far, seven of these forums have been held and they have served as an effective means of input to the Housing Element from the community at large and particularly from special needs groups and from local affordable housing providers and funding agencies.

Thirdly, a joint Planning Commission/City Council Study session was held in the spring of 2002 to illicit input on the draft Housing Element. This study session was advertised and the public was invited to participate.

Fourth, Public Hearing will be held when the draft housing Element is formally brought before both the Planning Commission and City Council in the late winter/early spring of 2003.

In addition, a copy of the documents has been placed in the local public library as a means of encouraging full public participation in the process.

E. Summary of Key Housing Concerns and Goals

There are no land-use, infrastructure or institutional constraints that would limit the ability of the City to meet the 114 unit annual increase in housing. A plan is currently in place to remedy the one potential constraint- lack of an adequate water supply. (See Program I). Of greater concern are:

- the large inventory of sub-standard housing;
- the elevated levels of low and very low income individuals;

- the lack of quality job opportunities in the private sector of the local economy; and,
- the lack of adequate housing for specific special needs groups.

The Census 2000 indicated an overall 14.1% rental vacancy rate, suggesting that an adequate supply of multi-family housing exists, although a significant portion of this housing is sub-standard. With specific regard to low income subsidized affordable apartments there also appears to generally be an adequate supply compared to the demand. The one exception in this regard is the need for increased specialized multi-family housing for senior and handicapped persons. (See Programs 18) Other pressing housing needs include:

- upgrading the large stock of substandard housing including single family, multi-family and motels used for permanent and/or seasonal housing (See Programs 11-17);
- upgrading the housing options for various special needs housing groups including farmworkers, the homeless, and seniors. (See Programs 21-27);
- providing enhanced affordable home ownership opportunities, particularly for very low income households and the bottom half of the low income group. (See Programs 6-9);
- providing increased specialized congregate senior care facilities. (See Programs 19 and 20); and
- encouraging mixed-use development in the vicinity of downtown and infill development throughout the urban core of Blythe. (See Programs 4, 5 and 16)

Chapter 2: Demographic Characteristics

A. Overview of Blythe

Situated near the north end of the Palo Verde Valley between Phoenix (150 miles to the east) and Los Angeles (225 miles to the west) Blythe's downtown sits just a few miles from the Colorado River. Recent annexations have provided the City with an approximately eleven (11) mile stretch of river frontage.

Blythe's economy has traditionally been dominated by three factors:

- agricultural production, which has been made possible by the first priority water rights to the Colorado River enjoyed by the Palo Verde Valley;
- the City's location along one of the country's key east-west highways, which meant that all through traffic was funneled through its extended main street (Hobsonway) and its downtown. This translated into in a healthy service sector to meet the needs of passing motorists; and,
- to some extent by tourism, which is has grown considerably in recent decades (see below).

Change began to happen in the 70's with the opening of the Interstate Highway which by-passes both the main street and the downtown. This resulted in the closure of many service businesses along Hobsonway and other streets in the downtown area that derived a substantial amount of their revenue from travelers that were obliged to travel through the core of the community. Freeway service industry business is now confined mainly to areas adjacent to two freeway exits- Lovekin and Intake Boulevards.

A second factor was the opening of two prisons in the early 1990's in an area (twenty) 20 miles west of downtown Blythe. For tax revenue generating purposes, these institutions were annexed into the City of Blythe, thereby providing a much needed increase in its annual revenues. Furthermore, prison staff salaries have provided a sizable market for homes in the \$100,000 plus range that existed on only a very limited basis before the advent of the prisons.

While the prisons have had a dramatic effect on the community's economy, it is also true that their impact has been substantially less than anticipated. Partly, this is because only two of an originally anticipated six prison complexes have been built and there are no concrete plans for others to be added at this time. A second reason is that a high percentage of correctional officers at the two prisons do not live in the Blythe area. (See Section B below)

A developing component of the region's economy is the winter visitor and retirement market. This is driven by the City's mild winter weather and its proximity to the world's largest annual rock and mineral festival in Quartzsite, Arizona, an easy twenty (20) minute drive from Blythe.

The Blythe economy is also supported by a substantial amount of tourism associated with the Colorado River during the warmer months. This market is also a component of the economy that is expected to grow.

B. Population Trends

Overview

Census 2000 figures indicate that the City of Blythe population has increased considerably in the last decade from 8,428 to 20,463ⁱⁱⁱ. However, these gains are almost entirely attributable to various annexations, including the annexation of two state prisons that opened in the early 90's in the City. The number of persons living in group quarters rose from 159 in 1990 to 8,509 a decade later and virtually all of this increase is accounted for by inmates at the two prisons.^{iv}

Census 2000 reports Blythe's household population for 2000 at 11,954, an increase of 3,685 from a 1990 census figure of 8,269 household inhabitants. However, this gain is primarily accounted for by the household population gains attributable to areas that have been annexed into the City since 1990.

A total of 4,305 household population was recorded to live in these annexed areas at the time they became part of the City. This figure is 620 higher than the total increase in the City of Blythe's household population since 1990; therefore, the household population living within the present City Limits decreased by 4.9% during the past decade.^v

Table 2-1
City of Blythe
Household Population for 1990 and 2000 and Amount of
Household Population Attributable to Annexations Since 1990

(1) Household Population 1990	8,269
(2) Household population increase from annexation after 1990	4,305
(3) Total of 1990 Household Population plus increases due to annexation	12,574
(4) 2000 Household Population	11,954
(5) Difference between Column (3) and Column (2)	620

Source: Development Services Department

Student Enrollment Declines

This population trend, however, does seem to contradict the commonly held assumption that the prison resulted in a major growth spurt for the City of Blythe in the early part of the last decade. Indeed, Palo Verde Unified School District statistics indicate a peak enrollment of 3925 in 1994-an increase of almost 200 from 1990 and of 237 from 1988.^{vi}

But from that peak 1994 enrollment, student enrollment declined by 249 to 3676 in 2001. This may indicate that the area encompassed by the present Blythe City Limits did experience a sizable growth in household population due to the start up of the prisons, but that after this initial increase the population has either remained level or declined slightly. In 2002 school officials indicate that there has been a slight gain in school enrollment.

School officials note that over half of their students are eligible for either a reduced or free hot lunch based on their family's income, and that the percentage of eligible students has been slowly declining over the last decade. One speculation on the part of school officials is that the school district's enrollment is down in the last few years as a result of the new 'Cal Work' approach to welfare, which allows families to receive public assistance for a far more restricted time-span than previously.

School officials speculate that the parents of school age children may have moved their households to urban areas where there is greater access to employment opportunities as well as training programs. According to the President of the Palo Verde Unified School District, other rural school districts throughout the state are experiencing declines in enrollment, and their administrators similarly attribute this trend to changes in the state's welfare policy.

Prison Impact

As stated above, the prison did add over 8,000 group resident prisoners to Blythe's population. Beyond that, the opening of the two prisons was expected to significantly increase Blythe's household population. It would appear, however, that the Blythe area is not experiencing nearly the population gains that would be expected if, indeed, most of the correctional officers lived in the area.

Figures obtained from prison officials indicate that about 40% of the staff from the two prisons live outside the Blythe area. According to one prison official:

- most of this 40% consists of entry level Correctional Officers;
- most prison administrators live in the Blythe area because they need to be on call; and
- most clerical, other non-officer and non-administrative personnel live in the Blythe area.

Hence, it is likely that Blythe:

- did not gain many new residents from the non-officer, non-administrative positions since most of these generally lower paying positions (with the exception of teachers) were likely filled by people from the local area;
- did not gain nearly as many new residents as might have been expected from entry level officers coming into the areas;
- gained relatively little population from those in administrative positions who live within

the Blythe area, since there is a relatively small percentage of administrators compared to total employees at the prisons; and

- gained much less than expected from an economic multiplier effect since a substantial amount of revenue expected from the paychecks of correctional officers has never been invested in the Blythe area.

Non-Permanent Residents

The above discussion concerning the area's population of permanent residents does not account for a significant number of elderly "snowbird" residents who spend their winters in Blythe to escape the northern climates. Blythe and the surrounding area is a major destination for RV seasonal residents who stay not only in RV parks, but many of whom park their rigs for extended stays on the abundant Bureau of Land Management land adjacent to the City's northern borders. Snowbirds are also to be found in abundance in various mobile home parks and in various single family homes, especially along the river and on the mesa adjacent to the golf course. Another non-resident population segment are those with second homes. Just four hours from the Los Angeles basin and only two and a half hours from Phoenix, the area is appealing to many who want a quickly accessible getaway from urban life.

Future Growth

Future growth in the household population of Blythe could potentially be fueled by:

- incremental annexation of additional territory into the City of Blythe;
- an increase in the percentage of correctional officers living in the area; and
- retirees and pre-retirees that increasingly extend their stays in the City to the point where they are considered permanent city residents.
- the availability of Priority One water.
- indirectly by growth in the tourism market, resulting in more service oriented employment and, therefore, in more permanent residents to fill those jobs.

Current activities that could potentially spur future economic development and population increases include:

- the revitalization of Blythe's downtown commercial area;
- capital improvement of the Palo Verde Unified School District facilities; and
- the construction of the Blythe Energy I project and the proposed construction of a second plant.

C. Age and Ethnicity

Ethnic Composition

Census 2000 figures indicate that predominately the City of Blythe population is either white or Hispanic, with the former making up almost 60% and the latter over 40% of the population (See Table 2-2). Slightly less than 10% of the population is black. These ratios are approximately the same as was the case with the 1990 Census.

Note: Because person of mixed race may be double counted in more than one ethnical category, it is important to note that for Table 2-2 the 'percent' column is greater than 100% and the 'number' Column is greater than the total Blythe household and non-prison group population. It is presumed, however, that the ratio of the various ethnic groups to one another is reasonably accurate.

Table 2-2
Ethnic Characteristics Distribution-2000

Race	Number	Percent
White	7,206	59.3
Hispanic Origin	5,571	45.8
Black	1,152	9.5
Asian/Pacific Islander	257	2.1
American Indian	251	2.1

Source: 2000 U.S. Census of Population and Housing.

Age

Table 2-3 depicts Blythe age distribution in 2000. The median age in 2000 was 30.7 years, up from 28.6 years in 1990. Factors fueling this increase likely include:

- an increasing population of elderly in the area. (See Chapter 3);
- school enrollment figures that have slightly decreased over the last 10 years; and
- more success with teen pregnancy prevention, meaning that some women are waiting longer before having children.

Table 2-3
Age Distribution of Blythe-2000

Age	Number	% of Total
0-18	4,465	36.8
19-34	2,337	19.2
35-54	3,209	26.5
55-64	937	7.7
65 +	1207	9.9
Total	12,155	100%

Source: 2000 U.S. Census. Note: the total (12,155) is slightly higher than the household population identified by the Census 2000, because 201 non-prison 'group quarter' occupants are included in the total figure.

D. Income and Employment Trends

Income Trends

Historically, Blythe has had a very small middle class and a very high level of poverty. Much of this poverty has been associated with low paying farmworker and service industry jobs. As discussed above, while the prisons did not have as much of an economic impact as expected, they did considerably increase the size of the middle class.

Typical of isolated areas in other parts of California, Blythe's median income has historically lagged considerably behind that of Riverside County, whose residents live predominantly in or near urban centers. According to the Census 2000, Blythe medium household income is \$35,324 or 82% of the medium household income (\$42,887) identified by this census for Riverside County (see Table 2-4). Blythe's estimated median income has increased an average of 5.5% per year since 1990 when it was \$22,847. This is slightly less than the 6% increase in median income that occurred in Blythe from 1980-1990.

Table 2-4
Median Income

Year	Median Income	Average Annual Increase
1979	13,594	
1989	22,847	6% (1979-1989)
1999	35,324	5.5% (1989-1999)

Source: U. S. Census

These figures likely reflect a) on the one hand, a surge in moderate and above income associated with the opening of the two prisons and incremental increases of public service employees and b) on the other hand, a national trend in the 1990's that has seen low income workers- such as farmworkers, service workers and welfare recipients receive an ever smaller slice of the total income pie. It is also significant that during the past decade:

- there has been no significant expansion of job opportunities in the private sector that are above the low income household thresholds (see below); and,
- there has been a decrease in the number of farm labor jobs, a trend that is likely to continue if, indeed a proposed water transfer would result in as much as 29.5% of the Palo Verde farmland being taken out of production.

The lack of marginal increases in medium income in the nineties compared to the previous decade suggests that the economic boom associated with the opening of the prisons has not significantly impacted: a) perhaps 40% of Blythe's population that is living below the very low income threshold and b) perhaps 50% of the population that is presumed to live below the low income criteria used by HCD. Indicators of this range of low and very low income households include:

- Census 2000 figures indicating that a) more than 30% of Blythe household have an income of less than \$25,125, the upper limit of the HUD income limit for a very low income four-person household and that 42% make less than \$35,000, which is considerably below the \$40,250 upper income limit for a low income four-person household;
- Palo Verde Unified School District statistics for 2000 indicating:
 - that 1,986 (54%) of their students qualify for the free lunch program.^{vii} The income qualifying criteria for the free lunch program is \$200-\$600 lower than the criteria establishing the 'very low' income criteria utilized by HCD. Hence, these figures indicate that at least 54% of PVUSD students live in households that are below the very low income level; and
 - an additional 220 students or 6% of the total student body, qualify for reduced cost lunches, which has an income qualifying criteria \$400-\$11,000 below the low income criteria for household income utilized by HCD. Therefore, at least 2206 children or 60% of the school age population live in households with incomes below the low income upper threshold;
- The large farmworker population that lives permanently in the Blythe area, is automatically considered by HUD to be below the low income criteria. An increasing segment of this population is moving into either the City of Blythe or its sphere of influence in order to better access the various education and human service amenities that exist in the City core. (See 'Farmworkers' subsection in Chapter 4.);

- Research for a 1995 Palo Verde Unified School District grant application for Healthy Start that indicates:
 - Although unemployment had been reduced between 1993 and 1995 from 9% to 7% primarily due to the opening of the second prison, that this figure did not reflect "...the mainly seasonal employment nature of this predominantly agricultural community". Agricultural workers who "... stay year round in Blythe are usually unemployed for only half the year....".
 - A study by the Employment Development Department reported in the Riverside Press Enterprise in January, 1995 shows that unemployment in the off season in Blythe ranges near 25% among all residents and at 40% among Hispanics; and,
- Income data that suggests farmworkers average approximately \$8 an hour pay.

Employment Trends

One of the most striking characteristics of the Blythe economy is the high percentage of public service employees, totaling 2795 in 2000. Of this total, 2247 were accounted for by federal, state, county and city governments and another 548 were accounted for by various districts including the local community college, the school districts and the irrigation district.

The two state prisons alone accounted for 1827 employees. Six of the top nine employers are from the public sector; of the three that are not classified as public sector, one is the local hospital, which is a for-profit medical institution.

A second notable employment characteristic is that roughly two-thirds of the jobs at the two major retailers in the City (Albertson's and K-Mart) are part time jobs. It is assumed that a similar percentage of jobs at other retail trade and service industries also apply, which impact the ability of many households with their ability to pay for their housing.

The number of farmworkers who are permanent residents in the Blythe area is estimated at between 2,000-4,000; in addition there is estimated to be another 2,000-4,000 farmworkers who either commute to work from the U.S./Mexican border areas or are migrant workers. Hence, farmworkers constitutes the major employer in the Blythe area, if one counts part-time, temporary and seasonal positions. It is noteworthy that HUD automatically classifies farmworkers households as low income, farmworkers generally receive no benefits and they average in the neighborhood of only \$8.00 an hour in wages.

The number of farmworkers employed, however is expected in the long term to be significantly impacted by a tentative agreement whereby up to 26.5% of the irrigation water in the Palo Verde Valley would be sold to the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California. However, very little impact is expected on employment in the next decade since MWD will likely need only a very small percentage of this water during that time period.

Table 2-5
Major Employers in the Blythe Area

Government & Public Services

Name of company	# of Employee	Product/Description
Ironwood State Prison	1076	Level III prison
Chuckawalla State Prison	751	Level II prison
Palo Verde Unified School District	398	Public Schools
County Of Riverside	160	government
City of Blythe	103	government
State of California NON-PRISON	84	government
Palo Verde Irrigation District	75	Public irrigation
Palo Verde Community College District	75 (also part time instructor 3-9 hrs wk. At \$20-35 an hour.)	Community College
U.S. Government	Total = 77	government

Private Employers

Morgan Corp.	190	Manufacturing
Palo Verde Hospital	101 (plus 54 part time)	Medical
Toshin Trading Co.	45	Feed Processor
K-mart Corporation	40 (also 60 part time at 25 hr. wk. average)	Department store
Albertson's	30 (also 78 part time at 24 hrs. wk. min.)	Supermarket
Fisher Enterprises	21 (up to 200 part time- over 40 hours for 2 months a year)	Vegetable packer

Source: Development Services Research in July 2000

Note: While only the Fisher Enterprises show up as a major employer of farmworkers, it is estimated that between 2,000-4,000 farmworkers are employed temporarily, part-time or full time in the Palo Verde Valley.

Chapter 3: Housing Trends and Affordability

A. Household Trends

Housing Unit Increases

Census 2000 figures indicate that 11,954 (or 58.5%) of Blythe's total population (20,463) live in a household- meaning multi-family, duplex, or single family unit (including mobile homes and RV's). The other 39.5% of its population lives in group quarters; of the 8,469 living in group quarter all but 201 are inmates at the two state prisons located within the City. By comparison, the 1990 census which occurred before the prisons opened showed only 159 persons living in group quarters.

Census 2000 indicates that the total number of housing units within the City of Blythe increased by 1,987 from 2,904 units in 1990 to 4,891 units in 2,000. This represents approximately a 68% increase since the 1990 Census.

These figures, however, are not at all indicative of the rate of new construction that has occurred on land presently within the city limits. Since 1990, a total of 1,443 housing units- equivalent to about 75% of the increase in Blythe housing units in the last decade- have come into the City as a result of annexation. Of the total housing units within the city limits, 57% (2,336 units) are reported by the 2000 Census to be owner occupied and 43% (1,767 units) are renter-occupied units.

Household Size and Quantity

Between 1980-1990, the average number of persons per household declined from 3.3 to 3.2. This trend has continued over the last decade. 2000 Census figure indicate the average household size dropped to 2.91 persons, which is slightly lower than the average household size for Riverside County (2.98 persons) and slightly higher than the average household size for the State of California (2.87 persons).

From 1990 to 2000, the number of households increased from 2,818 to 4,103. As with the increase in household population (see Chapter 2) and housing units within the City of Blythe, much- if not all of this increase- is likely attributable to increases resulting from annexation.

Permanent Vs. Non Permanent Increases

There are no statistics indicating how many of these new residences were actually built for residents of the area as opposed to 'snowbirds' and others whom are not considered permanent residents of the area. It is likely, however, that as much as one-third to one-half of this construction was generated for the use of non-residents.

Types of Housing Units

Census 2000 indicates that the current housing stock within the City of Blythe is composed of approximately 60% conventional single family units, 17% mobile home/RV/other units and 25% multi-family units. (See Table 3-1) Of the new construction that has occurred within Blythe's City Limits since 1995, 46% has been single family, 16% mobile home, and 37% has been multi-family, which includes duplexes. The increased proportion of multi-family units since 1995 is primarily accounted for by several large affordable housing projects. (See Chapter 6)

Table 3-1
Housing Units in Blythe by Number of Units per Structure

Type of Structure	Number of Units	Percent of Total
1 unit structure	2833	58.4%
2-4 unit structure	417	8.6%
5+ unit structure	794	16.5%
Mobile home/RV/other	807	16.7 %
Total	4,851	100%

Source: Census 2000

Vacancy Rate

Vacancy rates are commonly used as an indicator of housing market activity in a given area. The individual vacancy rate for a community theoretically measures the health of the local housing market. The vacancy rate is the percentage of the total housing stock that is vacant and/or available for sale or rent at any one time. An overall vacancy rate of 5-6% is considered to be a healthy vacancy rate for both owner and non-owner occupied units.

The City of Blythe had an over-all vacancy rate of 5.61% in 1990. It climbed to 6.86% in 1994 and has risen dramatically since then. According to Census 2000 figures **the over-all vacancy rate has almost tripled in the last decade to 16.1%. Particularly striking is the rental vacancy rate which the 2000 Census states is 14.2% compared to a 2.9% rate homeowner vacancy rate.**

These figures appear to be reflective of the vacancy rate for low income subsidized multi-family housing. With the opening of two large apartment complexes comprising 137 units, managers of other housing complexes have identified a housing surplus for this type of unit. It is also likely that the vacancy rate has been relatively high among the City's large volume of substandard housing units. (See below)

The preceding discussion applies to vacancy rate before the summer of 2001; since that time the vacancy rate has tightened up considerably for market rate housing; the City of Blythe Development Services Department estimated the vacancy rate in October 2001 to be below 10% and most likely in the 5-7% range.

The dramatic decline in the vacancy rate would appear to be directly related to the construction of a large electrical generating plant. The construction of which began in the spring of 2000. Employment on the construction project gradually ramped up to 450 workers by the summer of 2002.

The power project is expected to be completed in early 2003, at which time the plant is expected to have approximately 25 full time employees. As a corollary to the plant's completion the vacancy rate is expected to increase significantly.

Overcrowded Units

A common method for measuring overcrowding is to compare the number of persons to the number of rooms in the unit. According to California State Guidelines, overcrowding is defined as a household that has more than 1.01 persons per room not including kitchens and bathroom. Census 2000 data indicates that 595 housing units had 1.01 or more occupants per room in the City. This is equivalent to 14.6% of the City's total occupied housing units; by way of comparison, 16% of total occupied unit were identified as overcrowded based on the above identified criteria in the 1990 Census. The Development Services Department estimates that upward of 95% all units that are overcrowded are occupied by low and very low income households.

A 1995 Palo Verde Valley Unified School District (PVUSD) Grant application for Healthy Start indicated that among households with students attending their schools:

- Hispanic households average 7 persons living in a two bedroom unit, which is considerably above the threshold criteria for overcrowding; and,
- the overall average household has 5 persons living in a two bedroom unit, which is still above the threshold for overcrowding.

These findings would tend to indicate that the incidence of overcrowding is considerably higher than indicated by either the 1990 or 2000 Census. In this regard, it is important to note that PVUSD has an enrollment of 3,676 students, the vast majority of whom live within the City of Blythe.

B. Age and Condition of Housing Units

Age of Occupied Housing Units

The age of a housing unit is often an important indicator of its condition; older units tend to be in greater need of repair. Many federal and state programs use age of housing to determine housing rehabilitation needs. Typically, the useful life of major components of an average quality residential structure ranges from 20 to 30 years for such items as roofing, plumbing, paving and electrical. When a housing unit is over 30 years old, the increased need for the replacement or refurbishing of major components is an important factor in the ability of a community to provide safe and sanitary housing.

As indicated in Table 3-2, the 2000 Census identified that approximately 45% of the housing units

were over 30 year old and 63% were more than 20 years old. In comparison, the 1990 Census identified approximately 60% of the City's units as being more than 30 years old and 80% as being more than 20 years old. Over the course of a decade, the number of homes in either of these categories decreased between 15-17%.

Table 3-2
Age of Blythe Housing Units in 2000

	# of units	% of total units
10 or less	1,098	22.7%
11-20	707	14.6%
21-30	874	18.0%
31-40	931	19.2%
more than 40	1,241	25.6%
Total	4,851	100%

Source: Census 2000

Condition of Units

Previous Housing Element Data

For the City of Blythe's 1989 Housing Element, a housing survey was conducted to determine the quality of the housing stock in the community. The survey found that 13% of homes rated very good, 51% of the housing stock rated good, 26% were in acceptable condition and 10% or 286 units were in poor or unacceptable condition.

The Blythe Housing Element update of 1995 states that "approximately 47% of the City's housing stock is considered to be in very good condition, with only 3% in poor or unacceptable condition."^{viii} This would mean that only 97 units were in poor or unacceptable condition which strongly contradicts the much larger number identified by the 1989 census. This contradiction is particularly significant since between approximately 400-600 additional units were added to Blythe's housing stock as a result of annexation after 1990 and prior to the 1995 update.^{ix}

Blythe Redevelopment Agency Reports

Presented below is a summary of several Blythe Redevelopment Agency (RDA) reports that estimates the number of substandard housing units to be much higher in the Blythe Redevelopment Project Area than is indicated by either the 1989 or 1995 Housing Element. In these reports 'deteriorated and dilapidated' is defined as "... buildings in which it is unsafe or unhealthy for persons to live or work".

A) A May 1999 RDA report to the Blythe City Council concerning an assortment of parcels being considered for inclusion in the Redevelopment Project (all but two of which fall within the City limits) states:

* "Approximately 22% of all surveyed structures are deteriorated to such a degree that they are buildings in which it unsafe or unhealthy for persons to live or work." Of these residences the report identifies 18.1% (178 units) as being deteriorated and 3.3% (32) as being dilapidated.

* This same report indicates that only 7.8% of the residences are sound and that in addition to the 22% that are unsafe and unhealthy to live in, 70.8 % (695 units) are 'deficient'.

B) A May 1995 RDA report indicates that 36% of all housing units in Amendment Area #2 of the Blythe Redevelopment Project area were either deteriorated or dilapidated. The former accounted for 19.1% (26 units) and the latter accounted for 16.9% (23 units) The report also identifies 63.3% of the units as being deficient.

C) This is not a new problem in Blythe, according to an October 1984 report to the Blythe City Council on the original Redevelopment Project area. The report states "Of the approximately 600 dwelling units in the project area, nearly 320 are in need of physical upgrading. More than 200 units are deficient; over 100 units are deteriorated and nearly 20 are dilapidated."

As Table 3-3 shows, a total of 1,360 structures in three of the four portions of the development zones have been classified as substandard and fully 379 of these have been defined as deteriorated or dilapidated. These numbers are likely understated in comparison to all housing units within the City of Blythe because:

- the Blythe Redevelopment Area does not include large residential tracts of land that lie within the present City limits. Of particular significance are many older residential zones included within the County of Riverside Redevelopment Project Area that are likely to have a relatively high percentage of substandard housing;
- the boundaries of the Blythe Redevelopment Agency Zones are almost entirely contained within the City of Blythe, with the exception of three areas, only one of which has a dense concentration of housing units.^x; and,
- these numbers do not include any measure of substandard housing for Amendment 1. The RDA report for this area identifies 26 % of all structures as being deficient or dilapidated and only 5% of all structures as being sound. But it does not identify any numbers specifically for housing units.

Summary of Housing Condition Data

RDA reports identify four times as many housing units as being unfit for habitation than does the 1995 housing element identify as being in 'poor or unacceptable condition'. Furthermore, the RDA report identifies 1360 units as being in deficient, deteriorating or dilapidated condition compared to

95 units that are defined as in 'poor or unacceptable condition' by the Blythe 1995 Housing Element update.

Table 3-3
Number and Percentage of Substandard Housing Units in Blythe RDA

	Deficient	Deteriorating	Dilapidated	Total
Original Area	200	100	20	320
Amendment 2	86	26	23	135
Amendment 3	695	178	32	905
Total	981	304	75	1360

Source: Compilation of various Blythe Redevelopment Agency Reports by Blythe Development Services Department

Note: This table does not include units in RDA Amendment Area #1 because no comparable analysis was performed in the RDA reports.

RDA figures do not include data for one of the areas within the RDA district and do not include data for the portion of the Riverside County Redevelopment Agency Area which lies within the Blythe City Limits. Therefore, these reports likely understate the numerical amount of substandard housing that exists within the City of Blythe. On the other hand, the age of the existing stock of housing over either twenty (20) or thirty (30) years old has decreased by approximately 15-17% over the course of the past decade; This would suggest that a lower percentage of the City's present housing stock was likely in 2000 to be in potential need of rehabilitation; than was the case in 1990.

Please refer to Chapter VI for programs that have addressed this problem during the previous planning period and to Chapter VII for programs that are planned for the current planning period.

C. Housing Affordability

Overpayment

Overpayment is defined as more than 30% of all household income being dedicated to the cost of housing. According to Census 2000:

- 718 renter households in Blythe overpaid for their housing, accounting for approximately 40% of all renter household in the City of Blythe. City of Blythe Development Services Department estimates that over 90% of these were either low or very low income households; and
- 498 homeowner households over-paid accounting for approximately 26% of all homeowner in the City of Blythe; the City of Blythe Development Services Department estimates that over 80% of these were either low or very low income household.

However, the 1995 Blythe Housing Element makes the case that the Census estimate of rental household overpaying for rent is "... likely to be significantly higher than is actually the case".....since,

"...most rental units available have monthly rents which are below the low income overpayment limit." This is likely the case in the year 2000 as well.

Housing Prices

In 1990, the median home price was \$69,325 according to the City's 1995 Housing Element update. Since then this figure has continued to rise spurred on by:

- the opening of two state prisons in the region; and
- the appreciation of river and golf course frontage properties annexed into the City.

A local real estate broker estimates the median selling price of a single-family home in Blythe to be \$92,000, representing an increase of \$5,000 or about 4.6% from a 1998 estimated median selling price of approximately \$88,000. This broker estimates the median price has been increasing an average of approximately \$2,000 annually in recent years; this is consistent with Census 2000 figures which place the medium value of owner-occupied units at \$90,800. Table 3-4 shows a Title Company estimate of the median value of various types of housing.

These figures, however, are deceiving because of the wide differential in the quality of similarly categorized housing. As the prime example, two to three bedroom homes in modern tract developments on the City's north side sell in the \$100,000 range and are generally in excellent condition. By contrast, a large inventory of substandard and older homes in the older sections of the City sell in the \$40,000-80,000 range, these are likely to require at a minimum of \$4,000-\$10,000 in rehabilitation expenses.

Table 3-4 also implies that most sales activity has taken place with three bedroom homes, followed by four bedroom and 2 bedroom homes. While this is generally to be expected, it is unclear how realistic the low figure for mobile homes are, since used mobile homes maybe purchased on a cash basis, and therefore do not show up on the data base utilized here.

Table 3-4
Median Price of Homes in Blythe from 9/1999-9/2000

Type Unit	Price	High/Low	Total Sales-Identified
2 or fewer Bedrooms	\$52,000	\$145,000/\$30,000	13
3 Bedrooms	\$96,000	\$184,000/\$32,000	36
4 Bedrooms	\$112,000	\$230,000/\$53,000	19
Condos and Townhouses*	\$80,000	\$120,000/\$62,000	Unknown
Mobile Home	\$73,000	\$137,000/\$27,000	5

Source: Development Services estimates based on data supplied by The First American Title Company.

*Based on interviews with local Realtors.

Rental Rates

Current rental rates in the City of Blythe are listed in Table 3-5. These rates include apartments that are priced at market value but do not include rental rates that are subsidized. In this regard, it should be noted that:

- a relatively large percentage of Blythe's total inventory of apartments is subsidized by various means. (See Chapter 6); and,
- many of the non-subsidized apartments renting for below \$400 are suspect of being substandard. (See Section B of this Chapter)

Table 3-5
Current Rental Rates In Blythe

Type of Unit	Rent Per Month
1 bedroom apartments	\$323-\$495
2 bedroom apartments	\$382-\$570
3 & 4 bedroom apartments	\$545-\$850 (including townhouses)
Duplexes	\$400-\$500
Single family homes	\$500-\$900

Source: COB Development Services

D. Housing Affordability Analysis

HCD defines affordable to mean that a household is not paying over 30% of their income in order to meet their housing needs, regardless of whether they rent or own their own home. This section discusses the affordability of housing within Blythe for moderate and below household incomes based on this criterion. This section also analyzes the issue of substandard housing as it relates to affordability.

Owner-Occupied Units

Based on the housing affordability criteria, Table 3-5 identifies the maximum range of payments a four person household in each income category could make. As an example, the maximum affordable mortgage payment would be \$593 for a four person household with an income of \$23,701 (the lower limit for the low income classification). Conversely, if that same household had an income of \$37,900 (the upper limit for the low income classification) then the maximum affordable mortgage payment would be \$947. Hence, the maximum affordability mortgage cost for a low income family of four is between \$593-\$947.

Very Low Income

A family of four would require a three bedroom house in order not be considered overcrowded; a very low income family should not pay more than \$593, the maximum amount such a household could be paying for their home without exceeding the 30% limit on income spent for housing. Paying this amount would allow the family to buy a home for \$77,249; however, while there are three bedroom houses available within this range, the median value for a three bedroom home (\$96,000) is considerably above this figure. Furthermore, almost all single family homes that are below the 80,000 range would likely require additional rehabilitation expenses.

Table 3-6
Mortgage Affordability Analysis for City of Blythe

Income Range	Classification	Max.. Affordable Mortgage Payment	Affordable Housing Price: 20% Down at 8.5 % Interest
<u>less than \$23,700</u>	<u>very low income</u>	<u>\$593</u>	<u>\$77,249 or less</u>
<u>\$23,751-\$37,900</u>	<u>low income</u>	<u>\$593-\$947</u>	<u>\$77,250 to \$123,600</u>
<u>\$37,901-\$56,900</u>	<u>moderate income</u>	<u>\$947-\$1422</u>	<u>\$123,600 to \$190,540</u>
<u>above \$56,900</u>	<u>above moderate income</u>	<u>\$1185-\$1422</u>	<u>\$190,540 and above</u>

Note: Maximum mortgage payment based on paying not more 30% of aggregate household income

This situation improves for a very low income family of three, which needs only a two bedroom home, particularly if they are near the top of the income threshold (\$72,100), they could purchase a modern two bedroom condo in the \$62,000-\$69,000 range. The average selling price for an older two bedroom homes is \$56,000, although as discussed above, virtually all of these older homes would require at least some rehabilitation.

Low Income

For low-income families in the lower one-third to half of this rather large income category, they may face similar concerns as those in the very low income category. For those in the top half to two thirds of this category, they should easily be able to find a modern three bedroom home in good shape that does not over-extend their budget.

Moderate Income and Above

Moderate income and above households should have no problem buying a well kept modern residence of sufficient size without being saddled with mortgage payments that exceed 30% of their budget.

Rental Units

Presented below are maximum affordable rents for very low, low and moderate income households based on the assumption of not paying rents that exceed 30% of household income.

Table 3-7
Affordable Rent Analysis for the City of Blythe

Income	Number of Persons							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Very Low	415	473	534	592	640	688	735	782
Low	664	758	853	947	1024	1100	1174	1251
Moderate	830	948	1066	1185	1280	1375	1464	1578

Note: Maximum rent payment based on paying not more than 30% of aggregate household income for rent. This is the affordability criteria utilized by HUD, the California Department of Housing and Community Development and most other subsidized housing programs.

Very Low Income

As expected, rental rates are relatively modest compared to more urbanized areas of California. However, given the high percentage of very low income persons in the Blythe area it does appear that there is a considerable segment of these household or whom even the lower range of rents may reach beyond the 30% criteria.

Specifically, the City's 1995 Housing Element estimated that for 1998, 1/3 of all households (1142) would make less than \$15,000 per year, which is considerably below the upper limit of the very low income category for any size household. (See Table 1-2)

The maximum allowable rental payments for a \$15,000 income household is \$375 per month. (based on the affordability criteria of paying not more than 30% of household income for housing costs.) But, as shown in Table 3-5, the lower range of rents for a two bedroom apartment is above \$375. As discussed previously:

- any units below \$400 in rent are suspect of being substandard;
- the average household size in Blythe is over three occupants per household, meaning that the average size family would need to have at least a 2 bedroom unit in order not to be considered over-crowded; and,
- the average household with school age children is overcrowded.

Low Income and Above

Low income households would appear to have less of a problem finding affordable housing that is relatively well kept-up and has a sufficient number of rooms for their needs. For example a family of four requiring a three bedroom home should have sufficient options within the \$545-\$850 range, which correlates almost identically with the \$593-\$947 (30%) limits on housing expenditures for a low income household of four. (See Table 3-7)

Affordability Summary

For moderate and above income households, the inventory of unsubsidized housing at various price points appears sufficient to meet demand for either rental or owner occupied units. Particularly, with regard to rental prices, this is also true for housing available to low income persons. Owner occupied housing units appear to be affordable for those in the upper half of the lower income bracket classification, whom are making close to, or more than, the estimated median income for Blythe.

The closer one gets to the lower end of the low income range, the less likely one is to find affordable owner occupied housing. For those in the very low income bracket, finding affordable unsubsidized housing that has a sufficient number of rooms and is in good condition becomes increasingly unlikely.

In this discussion it should be kept in mind that Blythe's median income lags about 1/5 behind Riverside County as a whole.

Chapter 4: Special Needs Groups

This section identifies the special needs of under served populations including the homeless, seniors, and farmworkers. In most cases members of these special needs groups overlap with the low and very low income classifications.

A. Homeless

(Please also refer to Programs 23-27 and 29)

Contributing Factors

The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) has identified several contributing factors that have added to the increase in homelessness. These factors include the de-institutionalization of the mentally ill, a shortage of affordable housing, a lack of employment opportunities, negative family environments and drug and alcohol abuse. In addition, research for this report indicates several other factors have contributed to the proliferation of homeless in the Blythe and Coachella Valley areas. These include:

- unexpected increases in short term expenses such as medical expenses;
- unexpected loss of income by the family breadwinner;
- landlords concerned about an excessive number of household members living in a single dwelling unit often resulting in eviction should the tenant become delinquent on there rent;
- delays of up to three years to qualify for federal low income housing subsidies; and
- an increase in the number of elderly homeless. (See below)

Homeless Estimates

It is difficult to quantify the number of homeless within each community. One reason for this is that a significant percentage of the homeless tend to be mobile, particularly in a climate with temperature extremes. In the case of Blythe, the temperature can reach as high as one hundred thirty (130) degrees in the summer. A second reason is that a high percentage of the homeless tend to be unseen, especially in the Blythe area, which encompasses vast expanses of wilderness.

However, from interviews conducted for this study, **it is apparent that there is a significant number of homeless and that their needs are being woefully underserved**, particularly after the closing of the principal emergency shelter for the homeless in the spring of 2000. (See below) Listed below are first hand impressions from several homeless service providers and other data that offer evidence on the scope of the homeless plight in the Blythe area:

- An official of the Blythe Supplemental Social Security Insurance (SSI) office, observed:
 - there are approximately three hundred (300) homeless in the winter and one hundred (100) in the summer.
 - two hundred (200) plus homeless migrate to the high country of Arizona in the summer and return to Blythe in the cooler months.
 - many of the homeless have disabilities or other problems that prevent them from making enough money to afford decent housing. (DSSI pays only \$700 a month for disability.)
 - several encampments of these homeless exist along the Colorado River as well as in various other nearby locations.
 - approximately fifty (50) persons are hard core homeless who probably ended up on the street due to de-institutionalization of the mentally ill and are often beyond the point of being able to (or even wanting to) live in most any type of housing, or near people;
- The supervisor of the Inland Counties Legal Aid Office in Blythe observed:
 - fourteen (14) to fifteen (15) new families a month face eviction from their dwelling units.
 - in two-thirds of these cases, a contribution of up to \$1000 to cover two months past due rent would allow these families to stabilize their situation and avoid eviction.
 - recent anti-immigration legislation has increased homelessness among elderly non-citizens of Hispanic descent and forced many of them to live with their extended families. This, in turn, has heightened the threat of eviction by landlords concerned about excessive numbers of household members.

Note: This Legal Aid official note that recent anti-migration legislation forbids non-citizens from receiving supplemental social security, which has an upper limit of \$690 a month and is intended for low income persons. Instead, they must depend only on social security contributions they receive, based generally on low income laboring and service industry jobs. This means they are likely to be receiving Social Security payments of \$400 or less a month;
- The administrator of the Salud Health Clinic, (see below 'Support Services') observed that his clinic services in the range of fifteen to thirty (15-30) homeless persons per week-about 5-10% of the clinic's total clientele. He also noted that there are significant numbers of homeless living in remote areas. Aside from those living out of vans, tents etc., there are a number of homeless low income persons living in RV's, who frequent the area in the

winter months.^{xi};

- The volunteer administrator of the Harmony Lunch Kitchen (see below) observed that approximately one hundred (100) homeless persons utilize their facility daily and this figure include those living in more remote locations; and
- *County of Riverside Consolidated Plan for 1999-2004* estimates Blythe's homeless population to be five hundred seventy-five (575). Excluding prisoner inmates, this figure represents 4.3% of Blythe's estimated population, **a per capita rate which is 6.8 times greater than the per capita homeless rate cited by this report for the entire county.**

Facilities:

Shelters

Until recently, the *Colorado River Action Committee (CRAC)* was using two trailers at 180 South Main (near the downtown) for emergency shelter. The facility had sixteen (16) beds. The service provided by this facility was inadequate; families with children, battered women, persons with obvious mental and/or drug problems etc. were all housed in these two trailers. In addition, these facilities were not consistently staffed, resulting in an environment that was not always safe.

In the spring of 2000, this facility was closed because of the deteriorated condition of the trailers. This left the Blythe area with a single (eight bed) emergency homeless shelter operated by *Richard Allen Community Services (RACS)*, which **is woefully inadequate, compared to the need.**^{xii}

An EHAP capital grant of \$180,000 was approved in 2001 to build a new twenty-four (24) bed facility that will be located on the site of the recently closed shelter. The City leveraged \$9,500 in CBDG allocation for this project; the Blythe RDA also performed a non-cash leverage by approving a long term \$1 a year lease of RDA land on which the facility will be sited.

This facility is designed to house twenty (20) men and also includes separate quarters for up to four (4) women. Various funding sources, including an EHAP operations grant (over \$60,000), will help fund the operation of this new facility as well as the existing RACS eight bed family facility. The new RACS shelter, has been master planned to allow the construction of a separate women's facility of the same size as the men's facility; the present site comfortably allows for this expansion and the Blythe RDA was apprized of this intent when it voted to approve the lease.

Unfortunately, because the approved capital grant was inadequate to build the facility, construction has yet to begin; presently, RACS is working with HCD and City staff in an attempt to secure gap financing via a grant from a private foundation. The building permit application for the emergency shelter has been approved by the City of Blythe.

The shelter site is zoned General Commercial (CG) and this designation allows the intended use. In

addition such facilities can be located in the Community Commercial (CC) and Commercial Overlay (CMO) zones with a Conditional Use Permit (CUP). Transitional housing is allowable with a CUP on land zoned medium or high density residential (RM or RH), agricultural (A), Planned Unit Development (PD) or Specific Plan Resort (SPR).

Long term goals include seeking funds to construct transitional shelters and permanent facilities for homeless that have mental or emotional disabilities. (See Goal V, p. 97) In this regard, the City recently was gifted ownership of a vacant lot that is adjacent to the site for proposed homeless site; this could allow for the expansion of these and or other facilities related to the homeless. However, to utilize this parcel either as a transitional or permanent facilities would require a zone change; the City will consider the possibility of such a zone change in order to facilitate such a use. (See Program 3)

In addition to the Blythe facilities, the Samuel Powell Foundation (SPF) operates a ten (10) bed shelter for men in nearby Ripley (about 8 miles from Blythe) and is presently applying for funding for a thirty (30) unit all purpose emergency shelter in the Ripley area. Representative of RACS, SPF, the City of Blythe and the Riverside County homeless program staff met recently in order to facilitate the best possible coordination between the two agencies in the delivery of emergency shelter services.

Food Services

Just south of the downtown area and near the closed homeless shelter, the *Harmony Lunch Kitchen* offers two hot meals per day free of charge, Monday through Friday to low income persons. It averages about two-hundred twenty-five (225) meals a day.

Located in the same neighborhood is the *Food Pantry*, which also provides food to low income persons. In winter the Pantry serves up to 2500 people per month; they serve an average of approximately 700 families per month. It's recipients can benefit from two programs: an emergency food program and a commodities program. On a rotating basis, recipients are eligible to receive food every two weeks from one of these programs. *Palo Verde Valley Christian Center* near the downtown provides meals on Friday nights for low income persons, including those who are homeless.

Medical And Mental Health Services

The *Salud Health Clinic* (also near downtown) provides health services for persons of low income; an estimated fifteen (15) to thirty (30) of these (5-10%) are homeless. In addition, the clinic delivers health services to the homeless in remote locations.

The *Homeless Intervention Team* of the Riverside County Department of Mental Health provides intensive mobile services to adults who are seriously mentally ill and homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. The primary goals are to improve their immediate living conditions and general welfare and to assist them in accessing needed community support services for which they are eligible. The Blythe Office of the Riverside County Mental Health Department also offers various services for low income persons, including the homeless.

Other Support Services

Blythe *Safe Passage* provides bus vouchers for low income victims of domestic violence who are in need of accessing domestic violence shelters in remote locations. At present, Blythe lacks this type of facility, but Blythe is within the service area of *Shelter From the Storm*, which is located in Palm Desert. Their facility has a total of sixty (60) beds for victim of domestic violence, which is considered adequate to service a population of up to 500,000, according to *Shelter from the Storm* Executive Director. The total population of the *Shelter from the Storm* service area is considerably less than 500,000 residents.

Healthy Start distributes food vouchers to low income persons in need with a particular emphasis on homeless persons. Healthy Start both provide vouchers for temporary lodging. The Blythe office of the Riverside County Mental Health Department also issues motel vouchers to clients who are homeless. The local chapter of the *Red Cross* assures that temporary shelter and other needed services are provided during an emergency.

Continuum of Care Mobilization

The City of Blythe Development Services Department in conjunction with Riverside County Social Services have collaborated to hold a series of *Blythe Continuum of Care Homeless Meetings*. The meetings are intended to bring together the various homeless care providers for the purposes of:

- identifying programs or funding sources that would most effectively service the homeless; and,
- facilitating a coordinated approach to delivering services for homeless persons in order to avoid duplication and to get the most benefit for the resources expended on this extremely urgent community need.

The first two meetings were attended by over thirty (30) participants representing a range of governmental, non-profit, and church agencies that deliver homeless services. The meetings were also attended by a local newspaper reporter from the *Palo Verde Valley Times*, who has written a series of articles on persons and organizations who have been on the front line in helping the homeless.

B. Seniors

(Please also refer to Programs 18-20)

Demographic Trends

The Riverside County Office on Aging estimates the Blythe area has experienced a 46% increase of persons age (sixty) 60 or older between 1990 and 1997- a numerical increase of 851 seniors from 1,831 to 2,682^{xiii}. This compares with an estimated increase of 42% for those persons in the same age group living in the entire eastern part of Riverside County and of 28% for all of Riverside County.

Census 2000 figures show a senior population increase within the city limits to be 32% from 817 seniors over sixty-five (65) in 1990 to 1207 seniors over sixty five (65) in 2000. (See Table 2-3) Based on the percentages of total households that are either rental or owner occupied (see Chapter III), it is estimated that 686 (57%) of senior households live in owner occupied residences and that 521 (43%) of senior households rent.

The Blythe senior population is expected to grow, particularly regarding part-time snowbird residents, most of whom do not classify Blythe as their primary residence. In the long term, however, an increasing percentage of these snowbirds are likely to become permanent residents of the area as they increasingly spend a greater part of the year in Blythe.

While there is little hard data on the subject, service providers agree that the poverty rate among seniors have been on the increase. According to the 1990 census 703 persons sixty five (65) and older live within the city limits and 103 or 14.7% of them live in poverty. These poverty figures, however, are dramatically contradicted by a 1995 *Riverside County Council on Aging* survey that reported the following:

- the county-wide mean household income for seniors was \$13,731;
- the mean income for male seniors was \$17,070 and for female seniors \$10,153; and
- the mean senior household incomes included \$8,810 for Hispanics, \$9,502 for Blacks, and \$15,181 for Whites.

Based on HUD income guidelines for 1995 (\$14,950 and \$17,100 upper income limits respectively for very low income and low income households) the afore mentioned Council on Aging figures for the same year (1995) suggest that a majority of seniors in the county fit into either the very low or low income category. Furthermore, these statistics suggest that an even higher percentage of Blythe seniors fit in the very low income category since a high percentage of Blythe's population is either Black or Hispanic and Blythe's median income lags about one-third (1/3) behind that of the county.

This is consistent with input from various care providers who indicate that a majority, if not most, seniors in Blythe are living solely on supplemental social security, which pays about \$700 a month. As previously discussed, they also note that many non-citizen retired farmworkers receive only \$400 in social security benefits.

Low Income, Specialized Residential and Day Care Facilities.

Presented below is an inventory of existing or planned facilities and related services for seniors. The format used for this subsection includes a brief discussion of each type of residential care facility or service being provided.

Low Income Residential Facilities

Low income qualified facilities are often restricted to seniors (and/or disabled persons) This allows such facilities to better focus on a clientele with specialized needs. For seniors it also facilitates socialization with their peers. Blythe has one such facility-the Baldwin Apartments on the east side of Blythe which provides thirty-nine (39) modern one-bedroom apartments for seniors.

Skilled Nursing Facilities

Skilled Nursing facilities provide the highest level of care-including health care. Patients are no longer able to live at home and often are non-ambulatory, meaning they can't leave a building without a walker or other props. *Blythe Nursing Care Facility* until recently was licensed for fifty (50) patients; however, in January 2000 the state mandated that only thirty three (33) patients could be allowed at this facility. 96% of the patients are covered by MediCal/medicare.

Circle of Life, a newly opened elderly care facility with multiple services (see below), does not at this time have tangible plans to provide skilled nursing care. But the owner of this facility indicated that she envisions adding such facilities in the future. Her ultimate goal is to create an 'Aging In Place Facility', whereby a senior is able to receive all appropriate services at one facility as they go through various stages of the aging process, culminating in death. (Note: These facilities are becoming increasingly popular in the Coachella Valley, one of the state's principal senior destinations.)

Residential Care Facility for Elderly (RCFE)

Also referred to as 'Assisted Living Facilities', these facilities provide residency for seniors in need of limited assistance such as meals and medication administration, laundry service, twenty four (24) hour supervision, transportation for medical needs, hair salon & incidental needs. *Kaye's Board & Care* operates out of the owner's home and is licensed for five (5) persons. *Circle Of Life* opened in the spring of 2000 with fifteen (15) beds. The monthly cost of these facilities is \$1,500 and is not covered by Medicaid or Medicare.

Adult Day Care Adult Day Health Care Facility

Adult day care facilities provide relief for the primary care provider for dependents who should not be left alone. *Circle of Life* plans to provide this service for thirty (30) adult day care recipients by the end of 2002. Adult day health care facilities provide services for those needing care at all times whether on a short, medium or long term basis and is 100% Medicare reimbursable. *Circle of Life* plans to offer this service in 2002 for twenty (20) seniors.

City Council Funds Expanded Services

Recently an Area Wide Housing Study was completed by Laurin Associates which identified a theoretical demand for 79 assisted living beds. Based on this study, the Blythe City Manager asked and received conceptual approval from the Blythe RDA Board at its April 22, 2003 meeting to budget \$50,000 to finance the installation of Fire Alarm system at the Circle of Life. In addition, the Riverside County Office on Aging will contribute \$13,000 to this project.) This investment will allow

the facility to service up to 40 clients in the assisted living care program and up to 40 clients in the adult day program.

Other Support Services

-Food Service Program

Riverside County Office on Aging offers seniors two food service programs- a hot lunch program at the Blythe community center and a Meals on Wheels program, which provides meals to recipients in their homes. Both programs operate Monday-Friday (Weekend meals for the Meals on Wheels are provided on Friday.) Each of these food service programs average about twenty (20) to thirty (30) participants apiece. Seniors are asked to provide a \$2 donation (non-seniors can participate in either program, but are charged \$5)

- Home Repairs

Ageless Reflections, offers a program for home repairs; the City RDA has contributed \$10,000 to fund this program. However, the repairs are often too extensive (e.g. over \$3,000) to be financed by this program. Riverside Economic Development Agency funds several senior home repair programs. One has an upper limit of \$400 for repairs per household, per year. The other program has an upper limit of \$3,000, but this program can be accessed only once per household.

Senior Housing Needs Assessment

Overview

Quality housing is a concern for very low income seniors, who as suggested above constitute the vast majority of senior households. According to the *Riverside Council on Aging* survey quoted above, more than one in four senior residents of Riverside County reported a 'housing concern'; the top five concerns identified in the survey were: affording utility bills (16.7%), completing outside or yard work (13.8%), having home repairs done (13.7%), affording rent/mortgage payments (13.6%) and locating a contractor to have repairs completed (13.1%).

Based on interviews with senior service providers, Blythe seniors' top housing priorities are:

- increased senior multi-family housing similar to Baldwin apartments;
- increased and more extensive rehabilitations of existing senior housing units; and
- the need for additional specialized senior residential care facilities.

Multi-family Apartments

At the present time the City of Blythe has a total of thirty six (36) apartment units that have received some form of public funding and are restricted for use by low and moderate income senior households

who are sixty two (62) and over. All of these units are located at the Baldwin apartment complex. These units represent 7.4% of the total multi-family units that restricted for low and moderate income households. According to the 2000 census, 9.9% of Blythe's population is sixty five (65) or older and 17.6% of Blythe's population is over fifty five (55).

According to the manager of the Baldwin Apartments, demand for multi-family specialized senior housing units far exceeds supply. He said these units appeal to the desire of most seniors to live independently and he estimates that two additional senior complexes of approximately the same size as the Baldwin Apartments would be warranted in Blythe.

A case worker with the County of Riverside Adult Protective Services Program, (see below) indicated that at least one additional senior apartment complex the size of the Baldwin apartments is needed. This same caseworker also indicated that such a facility would be much more convenient for seniors if located in closer proximity to the downtown core and near various amenities utilized by seniors. The manager of the Baldwin Apartments suggested that the problem of access could better be solved via expanded dial a ride service; at present one has to call twenty four (24) hours in advance in order to access this service.

Rehabilitation

Indications from several local senior service providers are that home repairs are a largely unmet need. Over fifty (50) senior home rehabilitations occurred during the one year (1997) when the Riverside Economic Development Agency had a working agreement with the Colorado River Action Council to coordinate their senior home rehabilitation program in the Blythe area. Only a few such rehabilitations have occurred since that time. (See Chapter VI)

The same adult protective services caseworker referred to above says that many seniors, who own homes in the older section of Blythe, have extensive problems with rusting galvanized pipes, clogged sewer pipes and non-permanent foundations or floors. She also noted that most of these households have benefited from utility sponsored energy efficiency programs.

Specialized Housing/Care Needs

A Discharge Planner for Palo Verde Hospital (located in Blythe) places approximately ten (10) patients a month in skilled nursing homes. Because there is a shortage of these facilities in Blythe, she must place half of these patients at distant facilities mainly in the Coachella Valley area.^{xiv} She estimates that to fulfill the demand generated locally without relying on out of area facilities, the Blythe area would need to increase the number of skilled nursing facilities from the present thirty three (33) beds to 90-100 beds.^{xv}

She indicated that when an elderly person of limited means requires transfer to a temporary or more permanent residential/medical care facility far from his home this often impedes the patient's healing process. Particularly with lower income groups, she noted that the placement of a senior family member in an out of area facility makes regular visitations by friends and family increasingly difficult. This in turn can result in an increasing isolation of the senior from his emotional support system.

Another problem cited by this Discharge Planner is that many elderly persons need assisted living facilities, but cannot afford the \$1500 monthly price tag for such services. (The \$750 that MediCal/Medicare pays an elderly person is not enough to cover the price of living in an assisted living facility.) Hence, the living conditions of seniors often deteriorate to the point where MediCal/Medicare is forced to pay the full \$3000 cost of a skilled nursing care facility.

She gave the following example to illustrate the problem:

She had contact with an elderly man who did not need a skilled nursing facility. But he did require an assisted living facility, because he could not properly care for himself when it came to regulating such basics as daily food intake. Because he could not afford this option, she had no choice but to place the gentleman in a low income apartment. There his health deteriorated because of his inability to care for himself. He eventually required a dialysis machine and had to be placed in a skilled nursing home in the Indio area.

In this example, the Discharge Planner points out both that:

- if the assisted living option had been available to him, the total per month cost of his care would have been only half what the government ended up paying for his care; and,
- from an emotional perspective his healing process would likely be inhibited because of the infrequency of visits he will receive from his family and friends support network.

C. Handicapped and Disabled

Overview

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires that all new multi-family construction include some units accessible to the handicapped. The Building and Safety Department in the City of Blythe requires compliance with (ADA) measures as part of the Building permit, review, and issuance and inspection process.

According to the manager of the Blythe SSI office, there is a significant amount of overlap between those who are homeless and those who are emotionally, mentally and/or physically disabled who are defined by SSI as those not expected to make more than \$700 a month. (See also Homeless discussion in Section A of this chapter.) The 1990 Census lists a total of three hundred twelve (312) persons, between the ages of sixteen (16) and sixty four (64) as having a disability which prevents them from working.

Facilities and Support Services

The Baldwin Apartments provides three low income dwelling units reserved exclusively for the handicapped, disabled or mobility impaired individuals.

The Community Access Center, which presently services the Coachella Valley and Riverside area, is currently expanding its service to the Blythe area. Their mission is to "empower persons with disabilities to control their own lives, create an accessible community and advocate and achieve complete social, economic, and political integration." They have a full range of outreach programs that include housing referrals, rental assistance, and hotel vouchers for homeless or potentially homeless persons who are handicapped.

D. Farmworkers

(Please also refer to Programs 21-22.)

Population Estimates

The large agricultural industry in the Palo Verde Valley has attracted a number of farmworkers. Contacts made with a United Farmworker official for the 1995 Blythe Housing Element update indicated that four thousand (4,000) persons who reside in the Palo Verde Valley work in agriculture. The 1995 Housing Update notes, however, that the 1990 census did not show any farmworkers living in Blythe. While no other official data on Blythe's farmworker population exists, contact with various local sources indicate:

- There are between 1,000-3,000 farmworkers whose permanent residence is in Blythe;
- The average number of occupants in a farmworker household is in the range of five to eight (5-8) and such households have on average perhaps 1.5 farmworkers per household;
- Between 40%-75% of Hispanic households in Blythe contain at least one farmworker; (The current Hispanic population would be approximately 5,800, if it constitutes the same percentage of Blythe's household population as in 1990.)
- Between 700-1500 households in Blythe contain farmworkers;
- The total number of farmworkers has gone down slightly since 1990 (perhaps 10%- 20%); a decrease in migrant workers accounts for most of this drop^{xvi}; and,
- There are roughly as many combined migrant workers and commuter farmworkers as year round permanent resident farmworkers in Blythe. Most of the latter commute from either side of the U.S./Mexican border area.

Income Levels

Most local farmworkers are paid by a piece rate and average about \$8.00 an hour. Almost all farmworkers are seasonal employees, and receive no benefits. HUD automatically classifies farmworkers as low or very low income; locally, almost all farmworker households are very low income,

given the combination of low wages, no benefits, seasonal work and large household sizes.

Demographic Trends

According to both the administrator of the *Ripley Migrant Center*, and a representative of the California Employment Commission's Blythe office, there is an increasing trend for farmworkers to move into Blythe. They noted that this reflects a change in attitude on the part of farmworkers, who do not desire their children to pursue farmworker careers. Living in Blythe allows these households greater access to educational resources for themselves and their children.

The administrator of the Center noted that its occupancy has gone from seventy six (76) occupants four years ago to thirty-two (32) in the 1999-2000 season. In his four years at the Center, he has seen approximately fifteen to twenty (15-20) migrant families find permanent housing in the Blythe area. He also noted that the Dial-A-Ride bus service which comes once a day to Ripley is woefully insufficient to service farmworker needs.

As well as moving into Blythe, the Employment Commission Representative observed that many farmworker households are moving into the Mesa Verde area which is within the COB's planning area, but outside its city limits. Land is relatively inexpensive to buy in Mesa Verde. Most of these households live in used mobile homes that may be a decade or more old and in substandard condition.

Migration by farmworker households into Blythe may be slowed by several factors that could potentially increase the desirability of remaining in Ripley. These include:

- increased long term amenity development in Ripley- including a proposed state of the art water system and increased local Dial-A-Ride service; and,
- a proposal allowing fifty (50) of the ninety nine (99) units at the *Ripley Migrant Center* to be rented on a permanent basis by farmworker families. (At present the facility is only open for six months; the remainder of the year- from mid April though mid-September the facility is closed.)

Needs Assessments

Because permanent resident farmworker households tend to be large, their needs are often better serviced by single family units rather than by apartments that normally have more limited space and fewer total rooms. The *Coachella Valley Housing Authority* has done much to address these needs via its sweat equity housing programs.

Single men who encompass the majority of migrant workers are often housed in substandard hotels and apartments and often with rents that are seasonally inflated in order to cash in on the migrant housing demand. Although the *Ripley Migrant Center* is underutilized, their policies allow these units to be rented only to farmworker families. Single migrant men also face a similar barrier from many apartment complexes. The City of Blythe permits farmworker housing in all residential zones.

E. Large Households

(Please also refer to Programs 6-9 & 12.)

The 1990 census indicates that there were five-hundred, twenty five (525) households in Blythe with five or more members, two hundred, eighty (280) of which are renter-occupied and two hundred, forty five (245) of which are owner occupied. Large families such as these have a special need for three or more bedroom units.

With reference to the discussion of the homeless, the supervisor of the Blythe *Legal Aide office* notes that in recent years there has been a noticeable increase in the evictions of seniors and particularly of non-citizen seniors. This has not only resulted in an increased homeless problem, but has also led to an increase in the number of parents that are living with their children, often in dwelling units that are not of adequate size. This in turn has contributed to an increased tension between large households and landlords concerned about excessive household sizes.

A 1995 Unified School District application for *Healthy Start* indicates that:

- Hispanic families are on average 20% larger than non-Hispanic families;
- Hispanic families average seven (7) persons living in two bedrooms which is above the overcrowding criteria; and
- the average family has five (5) persons living in a two bedroom home which is still regarded as overcrowded.

To help address the problem, the City of Blythe has invested in infrastructure improvements for a new one hundred, nine (109) unit mobile home park and offers its support of single family sweat equity projects.

F. Female Head of Household

(Please also refer to Programs 6-9 & 12)

Because many female-headed households have one wage earner and dependent children, they have unique housing needs. Compared with other household types, female-headed households have lower home ownership rates, are younger, have lower incomes, and pay a higher percentage of their income for housing. According to Census 2000, of the 559 Blythe families classified as being in poverty' for 1999, 295 (or 52%) of these families were female headed families. Furthermore of the 429 families with children that were classified as being in poverty, 254 (or 59 %) were female headed families.

According to the former administrator of the local *Healthy Start* program, statistics from 1995 indicate that 70% of the births in the Blythe area were to single unwed mothers. Since then, this former administrator indicates that the pregnancy rate for teens is down but the pregnancy rate for woman under twenty one (21) has probably not changed. She also noted that while many of these

eighteen to twenty-one (18-21) age unwed mothers are living with their parents, this is out of necessity and not by choice. Often their first choice, if they had the financial means, would be to have their own dwelling units.

Statistics from the 1995 *Healthy Start* grant applications indicate that:

- parents of *Palo Verde Unified School District* students had a higher unemployment rate than the general population (10% vs. 7%) in 1995. Hence, single parents are likely to have an even higher unemployment rate compared to the general population;
- 20% of the total school population (over 600 students) in 1995 was composed of single parents and their unemployment rate is exacerbated by a lack of adequate child care services coupled with a lack of marketable workplace skills; and,
- the average income of households with students for the entire Palo Verde Valley (\$18,780 in 1995) was \$3,500 less than the median income for the entire valley (\$22,300 in 1995); hence, the income of single mothers is likely to be particularly low compared to the area's median income.

G. Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation

(Please also refer to Program 27)

Substance abuse counseling for those seeking drug and alcohol rehabilitation is offered by *Riverside County Mental Health*. *Metcalf Ranch* operates a drug and rehabilitation center located just outside the city limits, which has an eighteen (18) bed capacity. The average stay at this facility is between sixty to ninety (60-90) days. It provides services for men; no similar treatment facility is available for women locally.

Previously, *Metcalf Ranch* operated an alcohol and drug rehabilitation half-way house in the City of Blythe that housed approximately eight persons. Following complaints from neighbors, they were forced to close the shelter because the existing zoning did not allow this use unconditionally. Since then, *Metcalf Ranch* has been attempting to find an alternative location within the City of Blythe.

Metcalf Ranch has tried thus far unsuccessfully to obtain funding for a companion women's drug and alcohol rehabilitation center in the Blythe area. At present, women are referred to the *Gibson House* in the City of San Bernardino. This facility is operated by *The Veterans Alcohol Rehabilitation Program* VARP, which also operates *Metcalf Ranch*. Similar to the latter, it is a twelve (12) step based program and offers primary care for between sixty to ninety (60-90) days. The program is free for those with no income and based on a sliding scale otherwise.

Gibson House also offers an after-care transitional program as a follow up to the primary care program. They normally have a waiting list of between one to two weeks, meaning that woman from the Blythe area can generally access the program relatively quickly. An estimated 60-70% of their clients are homeless at the time they enter their program.^{xvii}

H. AIDS Victims Housing/Care

In collaboration with the *Coachella Valley Housing Coalition* (CVHC), the *Desert Aids Project* operates a thirty-nine (39) unit apartment complex called *Casas San Miguel* located in Cathedral City. This facility serves low income AIDS infected individuals as well other special needs groups. Twenty five (25) of their units are specifically reserved for AIDS victims; the other fourteen (14) are reserved for other special needs groups including those afflicted with mental illness, physical impairment, blindness and Addison's Disease. The waiting list to obtain an apartment is normally not more than two to three months. At present, *Riverside County Health Services* offers some AIDS prevention services in the Blythe area. *Desert Aids* recently obtained a grant that includes the Blythe area in its service area for a full range of on-site support services.

Chapter 5: Available Sites and Constraints on Housing Development

This section provides information on the City's inventory of vacant land potentially available for housing and identifies those non-governmental and governmental factors unique to the community that inhibit the development, maintenance or improvement of housing.

A. Non-Governmental Constraints

Land Cost Constraints

Extensive development of vacant land throughout Southern California in the past decade has led to an increased demand for land, which has resulted in a rapid rise in land values and consequently higher housing costs. With a few exceptions (see below), Blythe has remained relatively affordable in comparison to most other areas of Southern California.

This is particularly true regarding housing opportunities in the central part of the City where most of the moderate, low and very low income housing exists. According to area realtors the costs of vacant residential property in Blythe, for lots and home sites range from approximately \$15,000 to \$30,000 in the City's urban core. The upper half of this scale would include lots in areas adjacent to newer tract home development on the City's north side.

On the low end, residential lots in Mesa Verde, to the west of the city limits (but within its sphere of influence) are priced in the \$7,000 range. This area is characterized by numerous used mobile homes that take advantage of the county's less stringent requirements regarding modular units.

Where residential land prices have inflated at a much higher rate during the last decade is along the Colorado River, both inside and outside Blythe's City Limits. Lots sell from \$125,000 to \$200,000 along the river and in the \$110,000 range across the street from the river. This demand is principally driven by retirees and second home buyers. Prices have also increased for view property near the golf course; building sites range as high as \$90,000 for lots on Dekens Court near the golf course.

Prices for parcels on which multi-family units are allowed by right (high and medium density) are in the range of \$35,000 per acre. Present zoning shows very few high density lots; however, the City's intention is to create more multi-family zoning within close proximity to the downtown area as a component of the City of Blythe General Plan revision, which is in process. In respect to the present planning period, very little need for multi-family housing expansion is foreseen other than housing for seniors, which is currently in short supply.

It is significant both in respect to single family or multi-family development that the urban built portion of the central City has numerous vacant lots in the 5 plus acre range (including areas on the fringe of the urban core) as well as numerous lots less than an acre or so in size. In sum, there exist abundant urban in-fill opportunities. However, the practicality of individual's building on these lots is

limited to the extent that much of this land a) lacks paved public access roads and/or b) is not for sale on an individual lot basis.

Construction Cost Constraints

Labor and material costs are factors other than land costs which have a direct impact on the cost of housing. The single largest cost associated with building a new home is the cost of building materials, comprising between 40 to 50 percent of the home sales price. Single family dwelling construction costs can vary greatly depending on the size of the unit and whether it is a custom home or part of a larger subdivision.

While no formal study has been conducted, it is clear from discussions with builders, contractors and realtors that the costs of materials such as asphalt and cement are considerably higher because these are materials that must often be delivered from 100 miles or further away. It is also clear that additional costs are incurred in many instances because of a lack of skilled laborers and craftsmen, meaning such personnel must be imported from distant metropolitan areas.

The cost of construction would also appear to be higher, because the demand for new conventionally built homes appears to be relatively limited, providing fewer opportunities for builders to benefit from significant economies of scale. In this respect it is significant that a considerable portion of the new housing starts are mobile homes. While the cost of mobile homes construction is comparable to the cost of such construction in urban areas, actual demand serves to further restrict any potential economies of scale from conventionally built structures.

While it is true that the City has no direct control over such factors, indirectly the City has been very supportive of the initiative of locally based Palo Verde Junior College to provide: a) on the job experience for students enrolled in building trades classes b) adult education classes and b) a program to fund the start up of micro-enterprises. It is hoped that in the long run, such programs would produce a more skilled pool of labor for builders to draw from and more local enterprises that could deliver cost effective development needs such as landscaping and maintenance.

Financing Constraints

Availability of Financing

Financing costs can impact the ability of potential home buyers to make a purchase. Interest rates are relatively low at the present time (7% to 10%) but fluctuations can significantly impact the affordability of homes.

An analysis of information provided by local lending institutions in the City shows that from 1992 through the first half of 1994, 70% of loans made were for home improvement, 20% were for refinancing, and 10% were for home purchases. These statistics are in large part driven by the current California economy. Future loans and mortgages will be based on improvements or downturns in the economy.

Innovative Financing Programs

(Please also refer to Programs 6-9 and 21.)

Initiatives have been designed to help overcome, to some degree, the constraints imposed by interest rate uncertainties. Lending institutions have designed new financing instruments, such as adjustable rate mortgages, that increase the availability of financing by shifting some of the interest rate risks from the lender to the borrower. However, when rates are lower, adjustable rate mortgages are less attractive than fixed rate mortgages. Another new form of Federal Housing Administration mortgage, the Price Level adjusted mortgage, offers very low interest rates with payment levels tied to Consumer Price Index fluctuations but has the disadvantage of negative amortization, i.e. the mortgage balance or principal, can increase.

FHA and Veteran's Administration (VA mortgages, available with 0-5 percent down payment, can help overcome prohibitively large down payment requirements). FHA loans should be more flexible in local housing markets due to Federal legislation that increased maximum loan limits. Other legislation also requires Federal Home Loan Banks to establish affordable housing programs, to offer cash advances to lending institutions and to provide below market rate financing for low and moderate income housing.

Local and State governments have become prominent mortgage lenders through the issuance of tax-exempt bonds. It has been estimated that up to one-third of first time home buyers nationally, now purchase homes through mortgage bond programs. Because of concern over the loss of federal revenue, Congress has indicated that such programs must address a "public purpose" by being directed to and benefiting those who have a need and who might otherwise be un-served.

This avenue of financing, if not properly policed and executed by local and state governments could be severely restricted or eliminated altogether.

Energy Conservation Constraints

(Please also refer to Programs 10 and 13)

Overview

Energy costs affect housing affordability; in order to effectively address housing needs and achieve affordability of planned new units, greater energy efficiency is essential. This is particularly true in Blythe where temperatures can range from 130 degrees Fahrenheit to below freezing, making for a high demand particularly for cooling and a moderate demand for heating.

Aggravating this situation are the recent increases in energy rates in California and in the entire country as a result of various factors including the deregulation of electrical rates, the increased cost of petroleum products and increasing natural gas prices. These increases are especially difficult for low-income residents whose household energy expenditures consume a much larger percentage of their income than they do for higher income households.

On the positive side of the energy equation:

- Blythe has optimal solar insulation conditions for realizing either active or passive gains; as one example the Colorado River Country Fair Grounds, which is located within the City, relies totally on solar energy; and,
- Blythe also has ideal conditions for the utilization of wind generated power.

Transportation costs to link residents with various community amenities including employment amenities can also contribute to an indirect housing expense. This section also explores how those costs can be reduced.

Site & Building Specific Energy Conservation Measures

The potential is great for reducing consumption of conventional energy sources in Blythe. Various conservation measures are required by Title 25 of the California Administrative Code as well as the Uniform Building and Electrical Codes. In addition to enforcing state energy standards, the City can encourage developers/builders of new housing to site units to take advantage of the most efficient solar orientation somewhat to reduce heating needs in the winter but primarily to reduce air conditioning needs during the summer. Similarly, developers can be encouraged to situate landscaping features (e.g. shade trees) in a manner that helps lower energy costs.

In both the "retrofitting" of existing housing and the construction of new units, the City can play a major role in educating residents and encouraging greater awareness of methods of energy conservation. This can be achieved through an awareness campaign targeted to households eligible for programs. California Department of Community Services and Development (CSD) has several energy conservation programs; in this regard:

- both the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEA) and The Energy Low-Income Weatherization Assistance Program (DOE-LIWA) provides for installation of weatherization measures that increase the energy efficiency of dwellings occupied by low-income households; and
- California Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (CAL LIHEAP) supplements LIHEAP by expanding eligibility guidelines that allows more low-income residents to qualify; it also provides additional conservation measures that include the replacement of inefficient water heaters, refrigerators, microwaves and lighting.

In addition, Southern California Edison and the Southern California Gas Company can provide assistance for energy efficient design in new development and also give rebates as an incentive for upgrading to more energy efficient appliances, air conditioners and the more efficient use of fuel.

According to one study^{xviii} a building designed to be energy efficient:

- will use only 1/3 to 1/5 as much overall energy per square foot as a typical conventionally

designed building; and

- by using a combination of conservation and solar technologies, the energy used can be reduced by 90% or more.

Transportation Linkage Between Residential Zones And Frequently Used Amenities

The preceding sub-section focuses on minimizing the climate control cost within a specific dwelling unit or development. This section deals with strategies for minimizing the energy costs associated with transporting residents from their dwellings to places of employment, commercial, recreation, governmental and other community amenities that they would typically interact with in the course of their daily lives.

One strategy for achieving this is via a land use planning process that strives to reduce energy consumption by:

- locating new residential projects in close proximity to employment centers and/or other community amenities that residents frequently use. Such linkages can be encouraged in the revision of the Land Use and Circulation Elements of Blythe's General Plan which is currently in the process of revision; and
- creating pedestrian friendly linkages between residential communities and nearby amenities with an emphasis on transport via non-motorized means (walking, biking) and/or without the use of private vehicles (public transit). The City's planned Hobsonway Corridor Beautification Project offers the opportunity to create more effective linkages between the downtown and the many residential zones in close proximity to the downtown/Hobsonway corridor area. (Please also refer to Programs 4 & 5.)

Strategies for achieving more energy efficient linkages between residential zones and frequently used-but remote- community amenities include the use of car pools, van pools, bus service and even bike paths. Creating such linkages is particularly relevant in regard to:

- the transport of prison employees working within Blythe to the State prisons approximately 20 miles from most of the City's various residential zones. The prisons are the largest single employers in the region.
- the transport of students and employees to the new Palo Verde College campus approximately 5-10 miles from all but one of the City residential zones, and from all of the City's low and very low income areas. Creating such linkages is particularly urgent since the rural transportation infrastructure presently in place to the new campus will in all probability be strained to handle the increased volume of traffic to the new campus.

B. Environmental Constraints

Flooding constraints

Two types of flooding hazards are possible in the City:

- Flash flooding caused by intense but infrequent rain storms that can cause fierce runoff from the barren mountains several miles to the northwest of Blythe. Although FEMA has never mapped the Blythe area, various portions of mainly agricultural land annexed by the City on its northwest side as well as portions of the urban core have periodically experienced flooding. This vulnerability has been heightened by a lack of adequate storm sewers, in the urban core. However, storm sewer capital improvements in recent years has somewhat alleviated the situation. Also the proposed construction of the McCoy Wash Earthen Dam at the base of the mountain range to the northwest is expected to eliminate most of the flooding threat from these nearby mountains; and,
- High water inundation from the Colorado River, when up-stream dams release larger than normal amounts of water in heavy snow years. Over the long term, the threat of flooding to the central part of Blythe has been considerably reduced due to the extensive system of dams and reservoirs that exist upstream of Blythe, and by the series of canals and irrigation ditches that buffer the urban core from the Colorado. However, due to recent annexations that have occurred along the Colorado River, there are now sizable residential zones within the City limits that are potentially vulnerable to flooding in high snow melt years.^{xix}

Seismicity Constraints

The City of Blythe is located approximately 90 miles east of the nearest active earthquake fault, the San Andreas Fault. No area of the City is designated as an Alquist-Priolo Special Studies zone, and no active or potentially active faults are known to occur in the area. Special studies for seismicity are not required; however, the area is classified as a Zone Three seismic area, which does have implications with regard to the engineering standard that are required.

C. Infrastructure Constraints

Infrastructure constraints to achieving housing goals are those which prevent development due to a lack of adequate water, sanitary sewer lines (or inappropriate soils for septic tanks) electricity, and other essential public utilities and services. The primary actual and/or potential constraints in Blythe are with regard to the water supply and distribution system, as well as the limited existing sanitary sewer system and to a lesser degree limited storm water conveyance facilities.

Sewer Treatment And Transmission Capacity Constraints

(Please also refer to Programs 2)

Overall the City's waste water treatment plant, which was expanded in 1996, has a capacity of 2.5 million gallons per day, and a current utilization of approximately 1.4 million gallons per day. Hence, this capacity will have no trouble on an aggregate basis accommodating the 500 plus additional housing units that would need to be built within the City to meet the City's share of the regional housing need.

This analysis, however, is somewhat oversimplified; the City's boundaries have greatly expanded through annexation in the last decade. With regard to the sanitary sewer this means that the City does not at present have pipelines to connect several of the potential high growth areas of the City to the central sewer processing infrastructure. Specifically, none of the following areas has the sanitary sewer pipelines connecting it to the City's central sewer processing plant:

- the Hidden Beaches developments at the east end of 6th Avenue;
- almost all of Rivera Drive south of I-10 except for Destiny RV Park; and
- the Mesa area in proximity to the Blythe Municipal Golf Course.

Regarding the Mesa area, the City has recently installed a sanitary sewer force main along DeFrain between Sixth Avenue and Hobsonway. This line will have the capacity to service all anticipated future development in this area. At present this area is serviced entirely by septic tanks and this type of sewage disposal is adequate until the new system is in place. Regarding the Hidden Beach area and Rivera Drive, the lack of sanitary sewers does not constitute a short term limitation since the lots are large enough to accommodate septic systems.

However, the days of allowing septic tank and leach field installations along riverfronts are expected to be very limited as State mandates concerning drinking water standards are becoming more stringent. Consequently, the lack of sanitary services in these areas is definitely a long term impediment to future growth.

There are also other annexed areas in the City beyond the range of the sewer pipelines. This, however, does not present a major limitation since primarily these are low density agricultural areas that are currently adequately serviced by on-premise septic systems. Furthermore, servicing them by a public sanitary sewer system would serve to encourage urban residential sprawl in areas that the City prefers remain in agricultural use.

Water Capacity Constraints

Aggregate Water Capacity Constraints (Please also refer to Programs 1)

In contrast to the City's existing sanitary sewer system which has considerable excess capacity, Blythe currently needs to operate its water generating infrastructure (ground water pumps) 24 hours a day, seven days a week in order to keep up with water demand during the summer months, when temperatures are among the hottest in North America.

Hence, it is likely that the City could be severely constrained in the amount of additional residential (or commercial units) that its water system can accommodate in the absence of additional water infrastructure investment.

To address this issue, the City has made an application and been approved for a substantial revolving fund loan from the State of California to upgrade its water generating and distribution system. (See Program I) The system's upgrade is anticipated to be completed by 2004.

Development Limitation in Annexation # 43

Until recently a sixteen (16) inch water main connected the City's central water system only as far east as the El Rancho Estates Mobile Home Park, which is located on Hobsonway Boulevard, west of the intersection of Olive Lake Road and Hobsonway. Heading east from that point, the water main was only 6" in diameter and marginally able to service the dwelling units already hooked up to it.

Owing to this inadequate water transmission (as well as inadequate storage capability), the State of California Office of Drinking Water has in effect, imposed a moratorium on any future water hook ups in several of the most significant potential development corridors on the City's east side that were encompassed in Annexation # 43. These corridors include Riviera and Olive Lake Drive.

As a preliminary step to addressing this problem, the City has extended the 16" line east to Blue Ridge Road, which is located just north of the 1-10 freeway and in close proximity to the Colorado River. (See Program I). While this does mean that the upgraded water line now is in much closer proximity to areas effected by state moratorium, it does not, however, address the problem of inadequate water transmission along Riviera Drive (or Olive Lake Drive), which would require a another costly extension.

The City is in the process of exploring potential funding sources to remedy this concern. At the present time, development in the areas where the State moratorium applies is limited to the following:

- replacement of dwelling units on lots that were previously permitted; and
- construction of new units on lots that did not have previous hook up only if the lot is large enough to provide the required minimum setback between: a) a septic tank (including those of adjoining properties) and b) a potable well to service the lot.

Traffic And Road Infrastructure Constraints

(Please also refer to Program 16)

Blythe does not suffer from any type of traffic congestion problems. The road issues directly impacting on housing within the City of Blythe are the approximately three (3) miles of residential streets that are unpaved within its city limits. Added to this are the approximately eight (8) miles of Palo Verde Irrigation Ditch unpaved service road that are in close proximity to residential dwellers within the City limits.

Neither of these is a constraint to the construction of new housing in these areas. However, they both directly impact the quality of life that the residents of these dust filled streets face, especially since the Blythe area has one of the nation's driest climates. In this regard, Blythe residents are reported to have a higher than average incidence of suspected dust-born respiratory ailments such as asthma.

Furthermore, according to at least one realtor, the lack of pavement on several streets including Lane C (across Lovekin from the high school) constitutes a constraint with regard to infill development. Individual property owners are reluctant to build on unpaved City streets.

D. Governmental Constraints

The California Legislature has delegated to local governments specific responsibilities and a certain amount of discretionary authority over the development and use of land. Through land use controls, building codes and development review procedures, requirements and fees, cities influence the location, density, type, number, quality and appearance of housing units within their jurisdiction. These actions, in turn, affect the cost and availability of housing not only within their boundaries but in the region as a whole. This section analyzes the City of Blythe's development review and approval process to ascertain its impact on the City's ability to respond to its housing needs.

The purpose of regulatory constraints is to protect public health and safety. Some of these constraints are local in origin and reflect the desired quality of life values and objectives of the area's residents. Other constraints result from various federal and/or state requirements, one example being the various mitigation measures necessary for compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act.

Building Code Requirements and Code Enforcement

The Code Enforcement process is an area of regulation which has the potential to result in the loss of affordable units. However, it is also an important tool which can be used to require landlords to maintain rental units in a habitable condition. The Blythe Building and Safety Division enforces the Uniform Building Code (UBC) and the California Building Code (CBC) on all new and remodel construction. Additionally, Blythe's enforcement activities are regulated the City's Code Enforcement and Procedures Manual.

Development Fees and Exactions

Building permits and development fees, which are adjusted periodically, are based on the individual project's value and the number of units proposed. The residential development fees schedule for various planning functions that is applicable at the time of this document are shown in Table 5-1.

In addition there are several other non-planning Residential Development Fees. These include:

- Water Meter Installation=\$350 for a 3/4 meter; \$405 for a 1" meter; \$719 for an 1 1/2' meter.
- Water Connection Fee =\$500 per unit
- School Fee = 2.14 per square ft. for residential. For a 1000 sq. ft. residence this means a fee of \$2,140^{xx}.
- Capital Improvement Fee = \$500 for each dwelling unit, (including each mobile home), These fees are utilized to fund various infrastructure improvement projects.
- Wastewater Treatment Plant Capacity Fee = \$1300 per residential unit.
- Residential Construction Water Fee = \$25 per unit.
- Sewer Connection Fee- Based on Resolution 97-505, this fee apply only in selected area of the City where their is a need to pay for '... the extension of sewer facilities to new developments.'

Compared to other California communities, the City of Blythe's fees are not excessive. The City Council has the authority to waive some or all of these fees if it is found that the project will be providing low income housing. The council has waived certain fees in the past as a means of stimulating the development of low-income housing.

Development Processing and Permit Procedures

The development community often cites local government "red tape" and delays as factors that contribute to the current high cost of housing. However, certain steps in the development process are required by State law rather than by local regulation. These include the following:

- Amendment of the General Plan when proposed development is inconsistent with the adopted General Plan, if the proposed development is to be approved; and,
- The provisions of the Subdivision Map Act are required to be met;

Table 5-1
City of Blythe Development Fee Table

Lot line Adjustment	300
Certificate of Compliance	150
Tentative Parcel Map	1,000+ 100 per lot
Tentative Tract Map	1,500+ 20 per lot
Final Parcel or Tract Map	400
Revised or Amended Map	500
Improvement Plans, Plan Check	500
Change of Zone	1,000
General Plan Amendment Filed Alone	1,500
General Plan Amendment W/Zone Change	1,500 Plus Zone Change Fee
Minor Variance	300
Major Variance	600
Conditional Use Permit	1,000
Planned Development	2,500 inclusive
Specific Plan	2,500 Inclusive (plus 20 for each lot)
Environmental Initial Study/Negative declaration	500
Negative Declaration Recording fee	25
Environmental Impact Report	Cost Plus 10% administration fee
Certificate of Compliance	150
Revised, Extended or Amended Map	500
Site Plan Approval, filling fee	1,000
Temporary Use permit	
30 days	50
90 days	100
180-365 days	250

- Compliance with the provisions of Title 24; and
- Compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), which requires the City to assess the environmental effects of a project. The City must then determine whether an environmental impact report, a negative declaration with mitigation measures or a negative declaration is required. CEQA also establishes the amount of time required for public review and posting of environmental documentation.

In sum, federal, state and local requirements involve a certain cost to developers due to processing time that may be ultimately reflected in higher housing costs. Virtually all development projects require some type of formal local approval and environmental assessment, many of which require public review/notice periods and public hearings.

In accordance with the above, The City of Blythe does conduct project reviews in compliance with state-mandated time periods, such as the requirement of AB884. The following represent the average time frames for various planning applications:

- | | |
|---|---------------|
| • General Plan Amendment: | 3-9 months |
| • Re-zoning: | 3-9 months |
| • Tentative Subdivision Map: | 45 to 60 days |
| • Site Design Review (multi-family): | 30-60 days |
| • Building Permit Review for single family: | 5-10 days |

Many of these actions can be pursued concurrently. The processing times shown are often shorter than most other similarly sized jurisdictions in the region and are in compliance with State Law.

Land Use and Development Controls

Overview

Land use and development controls determine the amount, type, and location of housing. The primary policy tool for promoting a balanced use of land and resources is through the City's General Plan. The General Plan establishes an overall framework for the development and conservation of land in the City, principally through the Land Use element and through the Conservation and Open space element. State law stipulates that the General Plan be designed as a balanced, integrated document and that there be internal consistency between the various elements.

In this respect, residential land use must be addressed within the context of other variables including the following:

- the need for other equally important land uses such as commercial, industrial, agriculture, recreation, open space, and conservation areas;
- the need to assure that residential development is located in areas adequately serviced by transportation infrastructure;
- the need to assure that residential units are designed to protect persons and property from potential hazards arising from earthquake faults, unstable soils, wildland fires, structural fires, flooding and noise; and,
- the need for both commercial and residential in-fill development, including the uses of targeted sector plans to encourage such in-fill.

The primary means to implement the City 's general plan is through the zoning ordinance, which establishes development standards, intensity of development and minimum site requirements. Various residential zones have been established along with (minimum) requirements for densities, setbacks, lot coverage, building bulk and height, parking, open space, and related development standards.

While it is acknowledged that these standards by their very nature may increase the cost of housing in the City of Blythe, development parameters compared to most other California cities are not excessive nor overly restrictive. Rather, they are deemed to be the minimum regulations required to protect the general welfare and assure a decent quality of development.

Subdivision Improvement Requirements

All subdivisions in the City of Blythe must conform to the requirements of the City of Blythe Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Ordinance, the State Subdivision Map Act, and applicable Conditions of Approval for the project. Subdivision standards for minimum lot size width, and depth of lots, and parking standards are consistent with those utilized throughout Riverside County. However, density bonuses will allow for smaller lots or higher densities in certain instances in order to facilitate affordable housing goals. (Please also refer to Program III in Chapter 7)

Street widths are subject to the added standards of the Circulation Element. The established minimum City public street improvement requirements for residential subdivisions are as follows:

- half width right of way dedication
- curb and gutter (as determined necessary)
- 5-foot sidewalk adjacent to the curb (as determined necessary)

Any drainage improvements and easement dedication are subject to the requirements of the City 's standard specifications and may vary according to project scope and location.

Architectural and Design Standards

The City of Blythe exercises its design review process, through the actions of the Project Review Committee (PRC). Issues of height, boundary walls, fences or screening, planting, landscaping, open space requirements and parking standards are reviewed to ensure compliance with City standards whenever administrative or discretionary permitting is required. Zoning Ordinance compliance is otherwise ensured through the building permit process. Development plan review and approval typically ranges from 30 to 90 days, depending on the complexity of the project.

Planned Project Review

In 1997, The Development Services Department instituted a Project Review Committee (PRC) for any projects deemed to be of a relatively non-routine nature or that are subject to discretionary approval that will be impacted by the regulatory powers of a variety of City departments. Notices are sent out to all City Departments as well as to other relevant agencies and bodies soliciting their comment on the project. Those receiving letters can respond either in writing and/or by attending the

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designation. There are currently four residential land use designations, which are identified in Table 5-2.

Table 5-2
Residential General Plan Designations

Rural Reserve (RR)	Allows 1 unit per 10 acres, and is generally applied to agricultural land.
Low Density Residential (RL)	Allows for up to 7 units per acre, for single family development
Medium Density Residential (RM)	Allows up to 14 units per acre and allows for single family, duplex and multi-family units. Mobile home parks are permitted with approval of a conditional use permit.
High Density Residential (RH)	Allows up to 20 units per acre, principally for multi-family residences.

Zoning Ordinance

Based upon the City's General Plan, the City's Zoning Ordinance defines in more details the range of density of residential units allowable in each residential zone and such other important factors as the required lot area per dwelling unit and the specific uses allowable for each parcel.

The City's residential zones are listed in Table 5-3

Table 5-3
Residential Zoning Classifications

High Density Residential (RH)	Low Density Residential (RL-2)
Medium Density Residential (RM)	Residential Estates (RE)
Medium/Low Density Residency (R-M-L)	Rural Residential (RR)
Low Density Residential (RL-1)	Planned Development (PD)
Low Density Residential (RL-1-72)	Specific Plan Resort (SPR)
Mobile Home Park Residential (R/MH)	

For each of these residential zoning classifications Table 5-4 identifies the maximum potential number of units allowable in each zone and the type of residential uses that are allowable in these zones. It is important to note that the type and density of residential development that can be undertaken on a property with either a RML or PD zoning classifications is variable depending on the type of General Plan Designation (GPD) that is associated with that property. In such cases the GPD takes precedence over the zoning classification if it's more restrictive than the zoning classification.

Table 5-4
Allowable Uses via Residential Zoning Category*

Zone/GPD	Maximum units Per Acres	Multi- family	Single family	Two family	Group*** dwelling	Mobile Home/ RV Parks
RH/RH	20	PU	NP	NP	CUP	CUP
RM/RM	14	PU	PU	PU	CUP	CUP
RML/RM	11.25	PU	PU	PU	NP	CUP
RML/RL	7	NP	PU	PU	NP	NP
RL-1/RL	5.5	NP	PU	NP	NP	NP
RL-1-72	6	NP	PU	NP	NP	NP
RL-2/RL	7	NP	PU	NP	NP	NP
RE/RL	4.5	NP	PU	NP	NP	NP
PD/HD	20	CUP	CUP	NP	NP	CUP
PD/RM	20	CUP	CUP	CUP	CUP	CUP
PD/RL	7	NP	CUP	NP	CUP	NP
SPR	Discretionary**	NP**	PU**	**	CUP	NP
RR	*	NP	PU	NP	NP	NP
RE	4.5	NP	PU	NP	NP	CUP
R/MH	14	NP	NP	NP	NP	NP

*Note: In the case of RR zoning, only 1 unit per 2.5 acres is allowable if central water and sewer are not in place; and only one per acre is allowed for a property having central water in combination with a septic system.

** Single family residential development is allowable at the ratio of one unit per 20 acres without the adoption of a Specific Plan. 'Residential development, recreational development, resort oriented development and open space uses are allowed with adoption of a Specific Plan'.

*** Group dwelling are defined as building designed for occupancy by more than five persons who are not related by blood, marriage or adoption on a weekly or longer term basis.

Several other considerations to be noted with specific regard to the zoning ordinance include the following:

- Pursuant to recent changes in state mandates regarding second units, the City will adopt an ordinance which reflects these changes, including that a CUP cannot be required for such units (See Program 3) The City will also adopt an ordinance reflecting state mandates that Mobile Home Park must be permitted in all residential zones; as Table 5-4 indicates there are presently significant restrictions on residential zones in which they can be placed. (See also Program 3)

- Pursuant to state regulations, the City of Blythe will allow a 25% density bonus on projects that encompass a specific amount of low income housing pursuant to the most recent state legislation; since the City has no ordinance that addressed this state mandate, it will proceed in the near future to adopt an ordinance that reflects this mandate. Also pursuant to this mandate, the City on a case by case basis will provide other regulatory concessions and or/cost saving incentives for projects qualifying for a density bonus. (Please refer to Program No. 3.);
- Parcels encompassing lower density classifications will likely be more costly parcel to develop for low income housing due to the minimum lot size requirements. It is also likely that such a parcel will be farther from various support services such as educational amenities, daycare, shopping etc. that are generally located closer to the City core.
- Neither the City's Zoning Ordinance nor its General Plan established any minimum threshold of residences allowed per acre. Furthermore, the combination of Zoning and General Plan classification that allow multi-family apartments does not exclude such properties from being utilized for either single family subdivision or mobile home park development except in the case of a RH zoning designation. In such instances single family development is not allowed but Mobile Home Park development is allowable.
- Pursuant to state regulations, the City allows mobile home to be built on any lot where conventionally built single family units are allowed.

Development Standards

Based primarily upon its zoning ordinance and (and other standards), the City has established development standards that regulate development in more detail than identified in the previous section. Table 5-5 identifies lot size, dimension and setback requirements.

Other Development Standards include the following:

A. Minimum Unit Size:

- Single Family units must be a minimum of 1,250 sq. ft in the RE and RR zones and 800 feet in all other zones.
- Multi-family units must be a minimum of:
 - 350 feet for a bachelor apartment
 - 400 feet for an efficiency apartment
 - 500 feet for a one bedroom apartment
 - 600 feet for a two bedroom apartment

Table 5-5
Minimum lot size, width, depth and setback requirements

Zone	Minimum Lot Size	Setbacks		Minimum Lot:	
		Front/Rear	Side	Width	Depth
<i>RH</i>	15,000	15	5	100	100
<i>RM</i>	10,000	15	5	75	100
<i>R-M-L</i>	7,800	15	5	65	100
<i>RL-1</i>	7,800	25	5	65	100
<i>RL-1-72</i>	7,200	20	5	65	100
<i>RL-2</i>	6,000	20	5	50	100
<i>RE</i>	9,600	25	5	75	100
<i>RR</i>	*	25	5	75	100
<i>PD</i>	**	15-20	5	*	*
<i>SPR</i>	***	15-20	5	***	***

*In the case of RR zoning, only 1 unit per 2.5 acres is allowable if central water and sewer are not in place; and only one per acre is allowed for a property having central water in combination with a septic system.

** Based on the General Plan designation that applies to specific parcels with this zoning designation.

*** Discretionary

B. Parking Requirements:

- For all multi-family projects 1 parking covered parking space is required per unit and .5 uncovered units is required.
- For all single family project 2 covered spaces are required per units.

C. Building separation and height requirements:

- The required separation between two residential building is determined by adding the total of the separation required for the two walls of adjacent buildings that each other according to the following criteria:
 - Wall with opening: 6 ft. plus 4 ft. for each story above the first floor
 - Wall without openings 3 ft. plus 1 ft. for each story above the first
- Single family units can not exceed two stories high; multi-family units cannot exceed a maximum of three stories and cannot exceed a height limitation of 34 feet.

D. Street Improvement and Width requirement:

- Curb, gutter and sidewalk (5' width are required for all residential developed streets.)
- A minimum of 40' wide curb to curb paving and 60' public right-of-way is minimally required for minor streets in all residential developed area; increased width is required based on traffic studies to determine the anticipated Average Daily Traffic. (ADT)

E. Potential Land Available for Housing

Potential Multi-family Affordable Housing Locations

Allowable Densities vs. Potential Unit Production on Vacant Parcels

The City lacks any vacant high density residentially (RH) zoned land that could be utilized to accommodate low income and moderate income apartment complexes. However, as indicated in Table 5-6, it does have abundant land zoned RM, RML and PD with either a medium or high density General Plan designation (RM or RH) that could be utilized to accommodate multi-family residential development at a density ratio of:

- 14 apartment units per acre in the case of land zoned RM or PD; and,
- 11.25 apartment units per acre in the case of land zoned Medium-Low Density (R-M-L).

Parcel listed in Table 5-6 are listed with a 'potential unit' production that is below the maximum density ratio identified above. There are several reasons for this:

- Parcel (or set of parcels) along West Hobsonway have a combination of a residential and Commercial (CG= General Commercial) General Plan designation. While the CG zones could in all likelihood be utilized for residential purposes, technically they would require a General Plan Amendment. Therefore, the portions of these parcels that have a General Plan Designation have not been included in the calculation of the potential number of units.

(Note: While the CMO (Commercial Overlay District overlay) zoning designation in combination with a Residential designation does accommodate a more flexible mixed-use of these parcels for residential and commercial uses, **it does not restrict the use** of these parcels for residential uses including for multi-family apartments, assuming that the General Plan designation was changed to a residential designation.

Table 5-6
Vacant Parcels Appropriate for Multi-family Development

APN	Location	Acres	Use	Zone	GP	Potential Units
836-100-010, 011	Corner Defrain/ Hobsonway	16.3	Vacant	RM with CMO* Overlay	HD & CG	181 MF**
836-100-090	Hobsonway/ East of Defrain	10.5	Vacant	RM with CMO* Overlay	MD & CG	79
836-100-007	Hobsonway/ East of Defrain	59.72	Vacant	RM with CMO* Overlay	MD & CG	402
854-030-009	Rice Street, East of Seventh	4.07	Vacant	PD	RM	43 with CUP
842-080-003	Seventh Street, North of Chanslorway	9.38	Vacant	PD	RM	98 with CUP
Total		99.97				803

*CMO refers to a Commercial overlay District. This allows the developer the option for a mixed use encompassing commercial activities. It does not restrict the developer from undertaking residential activities unless as is the case in these examples the General Plan designation is also a Commercial designation.

**Number of potential units for these parcels based on the 2002 site plan approval obtained for a proposed 181 unit project.

- These parcels (or sets of parcels) have frontage along the I-10 Freeway which in these locations is approximately six to eight feet above ground level; sound mitigation in areas close to the freeway is, therefore, a much greater challenge than if the freeway were either below grade or at ground level. Hence, particularly given the relatively inexpensive cost of residentially developable land in Blythe (see below), it is a more realistic assumption that developers in the present planning period (as well as into the foreseeable future) would find it more cost effective to leave a sound buffer between residential building and the freeway. This variable has also been taken into account in calculating the potential number of units on these properties.
- 25% of the total land of these properties has been subtracted in order to account for needed infrastructure such as roads, parking, on-site retention basins/Parks, and recreations facilities (e.g. pool, recreations room). It is assumed amenities such as a retention basin/ recreation field can be sited in closer proximity to the freeway than residential building, thereby utilizing land that's only other practical purpose is assumed

to be as a sound buffer. However, there would still remain a need for non-buffer land to accommodate other infrastructure needs such as roads that would not necessarily be practical to position in this buffer area.

Multi-family projects with low density ratios

Relevant to the previous discussion regarding density ratios, two recently proposed affordable multi-family project received site plan approval from the City Council in 2002 that utilized densities ratios that were below the maximum 11.25 units per acre for RLM zoned land:

- The Monterey Villa Apartments Complex, which is currently under construction, encompasses 81 affordable units on a 19 acre parcel; this equates to a ratio of approximately 4 units per acre. This project utilizes California Tax Credit financing.
- A proposed multi-family project by Chesea Investment Company consisted of a total phased build-out of 161 affordable units on 16.13 acres (two parcels). Subtracting a one acre site approved for commercial development, this proposed project utilized a ratio of 10.50 units per acres. This project did not receive the California tax credit financing sought in 2002 for a Phase I 81 unit developments; however, the developer recently indicated that he is presently in the process of applying for an alternative affordable housing financing package to build a Phase I 81 unit development. The plan for the entire site received City Council approval in 2002; these approvals are still valid.

Both these affordable projects were able to utilize a lower than maximum allowable density of units per acre ratio owing to the inexpensive cost of land in Blythe compared to coastal and near coastal communities. The availability of such inexpensive land for multi-family development is expected to continue well beyond the end of the current planning period.

Potential Multi-family Units vs. Multi-family Need as Defined by RHNA

In addition to Monterey Villa Apartments, which as indicated above is currently under construction, 803 multi-family units could be accommodated on the parcels listed in Table 5-6. With the exception of parcels 836-100-010 & 011 which as mentioned above (re the Chesea project) has already received City Site Plan approval for the number of potential units listed.

While Table 5-6 is not a complete list of parcels with the appropriate general plan and zoning designation to accommodate affordable multi-family units, the listed parcels a) are more than sufficient to meet the City's need for affordable multi-family units and b) have proximity to sewer, water, and roads with 1500 feet.

In order to be compliant with RHNA, the City must show land available of 371 housing units for low and very low income individuals. **If one assumes that all such households will be able to afford only affordable multi-family apartment projects, Table 5-6 identifies sufficient land to build over twice the number of multi-family units required.**

If one assumed that in addition to these low and very low income households, all of the 166 moderate units identified by RHNA for planning purposes were to be multi-family units, the City would still have more than sufficient land to meet the City's total RHNA housing unit requirement for very low, low and moderate income individuals (537 units).

Potential alternative use of land zoned multi-family

As indicated above (see 'Zoning Ordinance' sub-section above) one potential concern in regard to the availability of land for multi-family development is that neither the City's General Plan or Zoning Ordinance a) exclusively reserves any specific parcels of land for multi-family development aside from parcels in the RH zone, or b) sets a minimum figure in terms of density that must be obtained on a particular piece of property. Hence, if enough of the available sites for multi-family units were utilized for other lower density purposes, then the City could theoretically have insufficient land to meet all of its low or moderate income needs.

This scenario is improbable given the abundant surplus of vacant land within the City that is appropriate for multi-family use. However, as a precautionary measure the City will monitor the parcels identified in Table 5-6 to assure that it does have sufficient multi-family land available to meet its needs for low income housing as defined in RHNA figures for the current planning period. If because enough of the parcels identified in Table 5-6 are utilized for alternative single family purposes than the City understands it will be obligated to add more site with the appropriate Zoning and General Plan designation for such uses. (Please refer to Program 34, Action III)

Potential Single Family Housing Locations

Low and Moderate Income Locations

As indicated in Table 5-7, 784 single family homes could theoretically be developed within two zoning designations RL-2 and RML that with a Low Density General Plan designation allows a maximum density of seven units per acre. Even if one reduces this figure by 25% to allow for the construction of streets, infrastructure open space etc., 587 single family units could be built in these zones. This compares with the City's need to provide a total of 537 residential units for moderate and below income groups. Based on the realities of California coastal communities, developments of such low density would be considered beyond the reach of household within these income categories.

However, several current projects illustrate that this is not the case in the rurally located City of Blythe:

- a 36 unit single family self-help affordable projects (by CVHC), the first phase of which is complete, is being built on land with a Low Density (RL) The City's Low Density General Plan designation for this subdivision allows only seven (7) units per acre. Furthermore, the CVHC project is utilizing a ratio considerably lower than this (below 4 units per acres including roads etc.)
- A proposed ninety (90) unit market rate subdivision that has City Council site plan approval

proposes a density of 3.76 units per acre on a 19.3 acre site; the developer anticipates that these homes will sell in the \$120,000 range, which would be easily affordable by moderate income families.

- A proposed 40 unit sub-division that has been bought before the City's Project Review Committee that proposes density of 4.65 units on a 9.03 acre site; similarly it is anticipated that these units would also be affordable for moderate income families.

Table 5-7
Vacant Land Appropriate for Single Family Development

Zoning Designation/GP	Acres	Max. Units per Acre	Potential Dwelling Units
RL-2/RL	34.55	7/ac	181 *
RL1/RL	69.57	5.5/ac	383
RML/RL	77.48	7/ac	406 *
RR/RL	331	1 per 2.5 acres**	132
RE/RL	273	4.5/acre	1228
SPR	2903	1/2.5***	1,161

*The potential units per acres has been reduced by a minimum of 25% to account for roads, infrastructure etc.

**Higher density (up to 2.2 per acre) is allowed with availability of central water and sewer; the figure presented here are based on the conservative assumption that neither is available sewer.

***Residential use is governed by either RR or Agricultural zoning criteria unless a Specific Plan is adopted.

Above Moderate Income Locations

The City has the development potential for 1,511 single family homes to be built on land that has development potential of between 4.5 and 5.5 units per acre within the RL-I and RE zoning classification. This compares with the City's need to provide 316 homes for above moderate income homes. Furthermore, as indicated in Table 5-7, the City has an abundance of land with other zoning classifications that could be utilized to satisfy the demand of above medium income individuals. A 99 unit single family subdivision on the Colorado River, received Final Map approval by the City in 2002; this subdivision is anticipated to appeal to those in the above moderate income categories.

Analysis of Need for Various Residential Options

In reality, the needs of lower income persons in Blythe, can better be served by a portfolio of housing scenarios that includes multi-family units but puts greater emphasis on single family unit or mobile home ownership and/or rehabilitation (the latter is also relevant to rental units). These options are particularly effective in Blythe, since unlike many urban areas of the state, a) single family lot prices are relatively inexpensive and b) there is an abundance of inexpensive "fixer up" homes close to the City's core.^{xxi}

Therefore, the Housing Goals section (See Chapter 7), does not identify the need to expand multi-family residential options. The one exception to this is for seniors, who also are in need of expanded specialized congregate care facilities. Sufficient high density vacant land close to the City's core is available to accommodate these needs.

All of the vacant sites appropriate for multi-family units as well as most of those sites appropriate for single family development are located within easy access to most important urban amenities such as educational, hospital, shopping, recreational facilities etc. Furthermore, the access is relatively easy to most of these amenities by foot or bicycle; there are no major thoroughfares as in larger cities that would either limit access or make it prohibitively dangerous for pedestrians, including children to cross. Hence, low income families that are likely to have less access to adequate private auto transport can easily get to most needed amenities on foot.

In general, the only exception to urban amenities (aside from employers) being located close to the central City is the local junior college, which has moved its main campus from a more central location adjacent to the high school/middle school complex to a remote location, approximately (six) 6 mile from the City's Center.

However, the college plans to retain its highly successful and free, non-credit program at its downtown campus. This program is particularly geared to the needs of low income persons with limited educational credentials. Also, there is bus service to the new campus.

Chapter 6: Status and Evaluation of Existing Programs

The last update of the City of Blythe's Housing Element occurred in 1995 and addressed housing needs for the 1993-1998 planning period. In order to formulate a plan for the remainder of the present housing element update period which ends in 2005, this chapter:

- inventories all existing subsidized affordable housing projects within the City of Blythe;
- Compares housing need policies and goals adopted by the City in its 1995 Housing Element to the actual housing accomplishments during the previous planning period (1993-1998);
- Analyzes housing issues that were inadequately addressed in the previous City element; and,
- Accounts for housing accomplishments in the first two years of the present planning period (1998-2000).^{xxii}

A. Existing Multi-Family Affordable Housing Projects

Apartment complexes that have received some form of public subsidy for moderate and low income households are listed in Table 6-1; this table also shows the date when the various complexes were built and the number of various size units for each complex. Tenants wishing to lease affordable units located in these complexes must not have incomes exceeding 80% of the county median income.

Of a total of 586 units in these complexes, 466 are restricted for households whose income does not exceed the 80% of medium income threshold level. **Only thirty-nine (39) or 8.4% of the 515 restricted units are reserved for seniors.**

Listed below are these various complexes, their address and the types of public financing they have received to partially or wholly finance the affordable units:

- El Solano Apartments at 170 South Spring, which utilized Mortgage Revenue Bond financing and is owned and operated by the County of Riverside Housing Authority. Eight (8) of its forty (40) units are required to be income restricted; however, in reality most of the residents are low income and are paying less rent than the maximum allowable for income restricted units. Although these studio units are not reserved for seniors, most units are occupied by seniors.
- Blythe Villa Apartments at 251 N. Palm, which utilized HUD Subsidized and Rural Development Housing (USDA) financing. Thirty-four (34) of its fifty-two (52) units are restricted.
- Broadway Manor Apartments at 550 S. Broadway, which utilized HUD Subsidized and

Rural Development Housing (USDA) financing. Forty-four (44) of its sixty four (64) units are restricted.

- Sunrise Apartments at 481 N. Eucalyptus which utilized Rural Rental Housing (USDA) financing. All fifty (50) units are restricted.
- Silsby Garden Apartments at 200 N. Ninth St. which utilized CHAFA and CHAFA financing. All fifty (50) units are restricted.
- Sunset West Apartments at 200 N. Lovekin which utilized Tax Credit/Rural Rental Housing financing. All forty-eight (48) of the units are restricted.
- Rhyolite Apartments at 400 N. Palm Drive which utilized State bond financing & RDA Funds financing. All seventy (70) of its units are income restricted.
- Squaw Valley Apartments at 12730 Birch St. which utilized Tax credit/Rural Rental Housing (USDA) financing. All thirty three (33) of its units are income restricted.
- Baldwin Apartments at 9555 Barnard Street which utilized Tax credit/Rural Rental Housing (USDA) financing. All forty (40) units are income restricted. Three are for the mobility impaired; the remainder are restricted for seniors.
- Quail Place Apartments at 551 S. Third St. which utilized 20% set aside/California Housing Finance Agency (CHFA) financing. All fifty-eight (58) of its units are income restricted.
- River Heights Apartments at 2400 E. Riviera Drive which utilized tax credit financing. All eighty-one (81) of its units are restricted.

B. Preservation of Assisted Units at Risk of Conversion

State Housing Element law requires the analysis of government-assisted housing that is eligible to change from lower income housing to market rate housing during the next 10 years. This analysis includes:

- an inventory of units that are risk;
- an analysis of the cost of preserving and/or replacing these units; and,
- resources and program that could be utilized to preserve these at-risk units;

**Table 6-1
Inventory of Subsidized Housing**

Built before 1990	Year Built	Studio	1 bd.	2 bd.	3 bd.	4 bd	Total	Expiration
El Solano	1940	40					40	2018
Blythe Villa	1977		28	40			68	2015
Broadway Manor	1978		24	40			64	1999
Sunrise	1982			12	38		50	2002
Silsby	1982			38	12		50	2013

Built Between 1990-1993		Studio	1 bd.	2 bd.	3 bd.	4bd	Total	Expiration
Sunset West	1990		10	30	8		48	2019
Rhyolite	1992			30	40		70	2022

Built Between 1994-1998								
Squaw Valley	1994		6	21	6		33	2024
Baldwin	1994		39	1			40	2024

1999-2000		Studio	1 bd.	2 bd.	3 bd.	4bd	Total	Expiration
Quail Place	1999			18	36	4	58	2027
River Heights	2000			33	40	8	81	2039
Total For All Categories		40	107	263	180	12	602	

Source: City of Blythe Development Services

**Table 6-2
Housing Mix Goal 1994-1998**

Income Category	Very Low	Low	Mod.	High	Total
New construction	103	43	72	38	256
Rehabilitation	5	2	4	2	13
Conservation	6	3	4	2	15
Total	114	48	80	42	284

Inventory of Units at Risk

At this time there are three multi-family complexes that are eligible to change from low income housing uses during the next 10 years due to a termination of subsidy contracts, mortgage prepayment, or expiration of restrictions on uses. None of these complexes have any subsidized senior units. All other subsidized multi-family complexes are legally obligated to continue to provide affordable housing for at least the next decade.

The three that are not so obligated are:

- The Broadway Manor which utilized HUD subsidized and United States Department of Agricultural (USDA) Rural Development Housing financing. Forty four (44) of its sixty-four (64) units are restricted. Broadway Manor could have terminated its affordable housing units as early as 1999; it however has not exercised this option. According to the 1995 Element, "The Broadway Manor Apartments are eligible for pre-payment incentives, but have not applied for the program. The contract for the project, however, specifically requires that if the owner opts out of the FMHA program, he is required to turn the units over to the Riverside County Housing Authority. The units will, therefore, remain affordable for the long term."
- Sunrise Apartments which utilized USDA Rural Development Housing financing. All fifty (50) units are restricted; Sunrise could opt out of its assisted units as early as 2002. Rental assistance is through HUD. But HUD is not likely to stop the subsidy in 2002, according to a USDA official who said they are much more likely to renew it. But if HUD did terminate the subsidy, Boone said USDA would likely step in to assure that the complex continued to have rental assistance. The HUD loan on the apartment complex is for fifty years.
- Fourteen (14) units at Bayfield apartments which have a termination date of 2004, but has exercised its option to terminate this unit in 2001, due to a foreclosure on the original financing and the subsequent retirement of the bonds associated with the financing of the project. However, the owners of the units have indicated in a letter dated August 10, 2001, to the Blythe City Manager that they will exercise voluntary price restraints such that they "... will not increase the monthly amount charged to those existing residents in rent restricted units, above the maximum allowable rental agreement for as long as they remain in tenancy at Bayfield Apartments." (See Program 34, Action III)

Cost of Replacing and Preserving

Section 65583 a (8B) of the State Housing Element Law specifies that the analysis of assisted units shall include an estimate of the total cost of producing new rental housing which is comparable in size and rent levels to an existing affordable project, to replace the units that could change from low-income use, and an estimated cost of preserving the assisted housing developments.

The Quail Places apartments which were constructed after 1998 had a per unit cost of approximately

\$56,132. It can be expected that replacement of any units in Blythe at this time would be in the same cost range. Including land acquisition, this would incur costs of approximately:

- \$2.8 million dollars to replace the fifty (50) Sunrise apartments;
- \$2.5 million to replace the forty-four (44) Broadway Manor units; and,
- \$750,000 dollars to replace the fourteen (14) Bayfield units.

The cost of preserving these units as affordable would be considerably less than developing a new project. State Housing Element Law also specifies that the assisted housing analysis shall identify the cost of preserving the existing housing and whether it would be higher or lower than the estimated cost of new construction. Based on the figure presented above, preserving these units as affordable would cost considerably less than the cost of developing a new project.

Not only would the market value of each unit be less than the cost of new construction, but under the Federal Low Income Housing Preservation and Resident Home Ownership Act of 1990 (LIHPRA), HUD will provide financing to assist with the preservation of such projects. This includes financial assistance in the form of rental incentives and acquisition loans up to 95% of equity. Furthermore as discussed below, the City has identified a lengthy list of potential resources and programs to preserve the units as affordable.

Potential Resources and Programs for Preservation of at-risk Units

A variety of federal, state, and local programs are available to create and/or maintain rental and purchase affordability for lower income residents. The following summarizes financial resources available to the City, private and non-profit parties to preserve/create housing that is affordable.

Federal Programs

Community Development Block Grants (CDBG)- This program is intended to enhance and preserve the City's affordable housing stock. CDBG funds are awarded to the City on a formula basis for housing activities. Eligible activities include: acquisition, rehabilitation, economic development, and public services. CDBG grants benefit primarily persons/households with incomes not exceeding 80% of the County median family income.

Home Investment Partnership- Home funding is a flexible grant program which takes into account local market conditions, inadequate housing, poverty and housing production costs. Home funding is provided to jurisdictions to either assist rental housing or home ownership through acquisition, construction, reconstruction and/or rehabilitation of affordable housing. Tenant-based rental assistance, property acquisition, site improvements, expenses, related to the provision of affordable housing, and projects that serve a group identified as having special needs related to housing are also available.

Section 8 Rental Assistance Program- This program provides rental assistance payments to owners of private market rate units on behalf of very low-income tenants.

Section 811/202 program- Non-profit organizations and consumer cooperatives are eligible to receive no-interest capital advances from HUD for the construction of very low income rental housing for senior citizens and disabled persons. Project based assistance is also provided in conjunction with this program. Section 811 can be used to develop group homes, independent living facilities and intermediate care facilities. Eligible activities include acquisition, rehabilitation, new construction and rental assistance.

HUD's Low Income Housing Preservation and Resident Home Ownership Act (LIHPRHA) - This program was enacted in response to concern over the prepayment of HUD-assisted housing. Generally, the law facilitates the preservation of these low-income units by providing incentives to property owners to either retain their units as low-income, or to sell the project to priority purchasers (tenants, non-profits, or governmental agencies.)

Pursuant to LIHPRHA, HUD must offer a package of incentives to property owners to extend the low-income use restrictions. These incentives would assure property owners an 8% return on the recalculated equity or their property, provided the rents necessary to yield this return fall within a specified cost limit. The cost limits are either 120% of the FMR, or the prevailing rent in the local market. If HUD can provide the owner with this return, the owner cannot prepay the mortgage. The owner must either stay in the program, or offer to sell the project (a "voluntary" sale) to a priority purchaser for a 12 month option period, or other purchases for an additional three months. The owner is required to document this choice in a Plan of Action.

Projects that are preserved under either of these methods are required to maintain affordability restrictions for the remaining useful life of the project, defined minimally as 50 years. Despite these requirements, property owners may still be able to prepay if:

- no bona fide offer to purchase the property is made;
- HUD does not provide some of the discretionary monies to priority purchases in preservation sales;
- the US congress does not appropriate sufficient funding to HUD to cover its obligations under this law;

State Housing Programs:

California Housing Finance Agency (CHFA) Multiple Rental Housing Programs-

This state program provides below market rate financing to builders and developers of multiple-family and elderly rental housing. Tax exempt bonds provide below market mortgage money. Eligible activities include new construction, rehabilitation, and acquisition of properties with 20-150 units.

Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) - This state program provides tax credits to individuals and corporations that invest in low income rental housing. Tax credits are sold to corporations and people with high tax liability and proceeds are used to create housing. Eligible activities include new construction, rehabilitation and

acquisition.

California Community Reinvestment Corporation (CCRC) - This private, non-profit mortgage banking consortium provides long term debt financing for affordable multi-family rental housing. Eligible activities include new construction, rehabilitation and acquisition.

Local Governmental Programs

Redevelopment Agency Programs - California Redevelopment Law mandates that 20% of each Redevelopment Area's Tax Increment Financing be allocated or set-aside for the development and rehabilitation of low and moderate income housing. State guidelines determine what qualifies as low and moderate income housing, which can generally be described as housing which, in exchange for favorable financing or other assistance is available only to qualifying households. In some cases, only a portion of the project must be occupied by low and moderate income families. In others, all units are restricted to low and moderate income households.

State law authorizes the use of redevelopment funds to make sites available for the construction of new housing, to provide subsidies for affordable housing and to aid in the preservation and upgrading of residential areas. The City can establish one or more redevelopment areas in need of redevelopment and the increased property tax revenue resulting from new private investment in the area goes to the local redevelopment authority. These tax increment funds must be used for public improvements in the RDA Project Areas and for affordable housing development anywhere in the City.

In addition to providing funds for a wide range of local housing programs, redevelopment enables the City to issue bonds and otherwise finance housing construction and to acquire land for new housing. Redevelopment agencies also have the power of eminent domain to acquire sites for housing, both within and outside of a project area. At least 6% of new or rehabilitated housing in a redevelopment project area must be affordable to low income households; another 9% must be affordable to moderate-income households.

Redevelopment has created significant new housing opportunities in areas where housing was not feasible because of site limitations, ownership, or market infeasibility. Redevelopment creates a potentially significant amount of locally controlled funds for the development of affordable housing. Furthermore, Redevelopment can target and assist in the provision of housing through site acquisition, land assembly, financing, and property purchase and rehabilitation.

Non-profit Entities:

Non-profit entities based relatively close to the City of Blythe can be contacted to gauge their interest and ability in acquiring and/or managing units at-risk of conversion. The California Department of Housing and Community Development maintain a comprehensive list of non-profit agencies engaged in this type of activity in the state. Entities with resources in Riverside County include:

- The Coachella Valley Housing Coalition (CVHC), which is based in Indio and has established a strong presence in the City of Blythe. Their activities include affordable

housing production and property acquisition/management.

- Link Housing which is based in Long Beach. Their activities include the development of Affordable Housing.
- Desert Alliance for Community Empowerment (DACE), which is based in Coachella. It directly services unincorporated communities in the Blythe area and has the capability of partnering with COB on affordable housing projects located within its City limits.
- Rancho Housing Alliance (RHA), which is based in Coachella and works in close cooperation with DACE, whose Executive was the driving force behind its recent formation. RHA has indicated their intent to have an active presence in the Blythe area. Their activities are primarily directed at the development of affordable housing.

C. Goals and Policies Adopted for the Planning Period 1994-1998

Housing Mix Goal 1994-1998

The generalized goals identified in the 1995 Housing Element are:

- emphasis on the development of affordable housing projects to address the needs of very low, low and moderate income households; and,
- development of a variety of housing types in a wide array of prices to accommodate existing and future needs of all existing socio-economic segments. To reach this goal, the update targeted the housing mix identified in Table 6-2. This includes new construction and the rehabilitation and conservation of existing structures.

Quantified Objectives 1994-1998

Based on these goals, the update identified the following quantified objectives:

- Assist up to fifteen (15) very low, low or moderate income households annually through grants for down-payments and closing costs via the Mortgage Assistance Program.
- Using the City's Redevelopment Agency Financing to initiate:

-Ten (10) Home Improvement grants annually of up to \$2,500 each to assist very low and low-income homeowners in the improvement of their property.

-A program of grants and loans to senior residents for up to ten (10) households annually in the amount of \$2500 per household.

-Assistance to developers of senior housing through housing set-aside funds whenever

possible. (up to five (5) senior households annually)

- Working with non-profit housing programs such as the Coachella Valley Housing Coalition to encourage the construction of five (5) ownership units annually.
- Working with affordable housing project owners to protect units currently restricted to low income households, from reverting to market rate housing.
- Assisting ten (10) low income households annually for water and sewer connections.
- Development of at least fifty (50) single family or multi-family affordable housing units.

Actual Accomplishments 1994-1998

Overall Production/Rehabilitation/Preservation

Total new construction for this period was three hundred fifty-two (352) units, which surpasses Blythe's construction need of two hundred eighty four (284) units for this period. In addition, sixty three (63) units were rehabilitated. (See Table 6-3)

Affordability Achievements 1994-1998

This section discusses various achievements with specific regard to providing assistance for affordable housing in the Blythe area. In reality almost all of these projects benefited low and very low income recipients with the majority benefiting very low income households.

Multi-Family Rental Units

Two subsidized apartment complexes totaling seventy-three (73) units were constructed during the 1994-1998 planning period. This total alone accounts for approximately half of the total new construction need for low and very low income households identified in Table 6-3. Thirty-nine (39) of these units were built specifically for seniors and three of these units were built specifically for disabled persons.^{xxiii} The total multi-family units constructed represents a 46% increase over the goal (50 units) for this planning period.

Sweat Equity and Co-Opt Home Construction

The Coachella Valley Housing Coalition constructed sixteen (16) new sweat equity single family homes all for low and very low income households. Many of these households include low or very low income farmworkers. The City contributed \$38,400 to these projects. The City of Blythe Redevelopment funds paid \$102,600 for the construction of a cooperative single family house. The home was built under the supervision of an instructor at Palo Verde Community College, utilizing students from his construction trades class. Subsequently this house was sold at a significant loss to a very low income farmworker family.

These two programs created a total of seventeen (17) low income owner occupied and affordable new homes. This amounts to an annual average of 3.4, which is just over two-thirds of the goal stated in the 1995 update.

Table 6-3
Total Units Constructed, Rehabilitated or Conserved 1994-1998

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	Total
Single family/	64	32	18	29	74	217
Mobile Home-	-	4	4	27	18	53
Duplex	0	0	0	10	0	10
Multi-family	72	0	0	0	0	72
Total new units	136	36	22	66	92	352
Rehabs.		3	57	1	2	63
Energy Conservation	-	-	-	-	-	
Total	136	39	79	67	94	415

Source: City of Blythe Development Services

Other Affordable Home Assistance

The City granted two down payments totaling \$19,435 to two moderate or below households and benefited four low income families with First Time Home Buyer Assistance totaling \$37,350. In addition, County funding financed eleven (11) first time moderate or below incomes home buyer's. The Blythe RDA spent \$35,474 on sixteen (16) Mortgage Assisted Loans; all of these went to moderate and below income households with at least four going to low income households and at least three going to very low income households. These various types of mortgages and grants for home buyers benefited an average of ten (10) families a year.

One moderate or below income individual in Blythe benefited from a Mortgage Certificate tax credit. This program allows a household to qualify for a larger conventional loan than otherwise would be the case.

Rehabilitation and Conservation

Sixty-five (65) rehabilitations of low and very low income homes occurred, including forty-five (45) for seniors. The Blythe RDA was responsible for five of these rehabilitations at a cost of \$57,490. At

least one of these was for a very low income household and the rest were for moderate and below income households. This greatly exceeds the five year goal of thirteen (13) rehabilitations for all income groups.

Efforts to document the number of local low income households participating in energy conservation programs have proven fruitless. However, one knowledgeable source reports that eligible low income senior households have generally taken maximum advantage of these programs.^{xxxiv}

Utility Connections and Miscellaneous

The Blythe RDA spent \$36,153 on utility connections for low and very low income families; records do not indicate how many households this program benefited.

The Blythe RDA also spent \$195,000 to acquire land for a developer that planned to build a low income apartment complex on North Seventh Street. Unfortunately, the developer's plans never materialized. The City of Blythe and the Blythe Redevelopment Agency, however, are actively seeking developers a) of senior affordable housing or) affordable single family developers (or mix-used developer) such as the Coachella Valley Housing Coalition (CVHC) that would be interested in developing this site. With regard to the latter, the parcel is adjacent to a 34 unit sweat equity project currently being undertaken by CVHC. (See Program # 6)

The RDA recently approved a motion that would allow this property to be utilized five additional years for affordable housing, including senior affordable housing. Another alternative is for the RDA to sell this land and then utilize the proceeds for the purpose of securing additional affordable housing. Such funding could be utilized to purchase land in a closer proximity to various urban amenities such as a super-market that are of utmost importance in the financing criteria for tax credits projects. (Program 18)

D. Housing Units Constructed or Planned for 1998-2005

Kick started by the completion of two large subsidized multi-family housing projects and a third that is presently under construction, the ongoing efforts of the Coachella Valley Housing Coalition (CVHC) to construct sweat equity housing, considerable progress has already been made toward meeting the City 's eight (8) year construction need for low income and below households. (See Table 6-4)

Furthermore:

- CVHC has recently completed construction of five additional homes for low or very low income households and has begun building the first ten (10) of thirty four (34) additional low income sweat equity homes to be completed before 2005;

- A one hundred ,nine (109) unit mobile home park has been completed and will offer market based housing that will be affordable to at least some households within the low income range;
- First Time Home Buyers, Rehabilitation, and Mortgage Assistance programs have benefited seven (7) low income Blythe families since 1998; and,
- The City of Blythe in conjunction with the Palo Verde College has built and sold one cooperative-home and another one is currently under construction. Both were built for low or very low-income families. Additionally, sites for two to six additional project homes are currently being acquired by the City.

The City of Blythe has already made a sizable effort toward meeting its over-all construction needs goal for low and very low income households. Since 1998, three hundred forty one (341) low income units have either been built or are presently under construction (including Mobile Home spaces-see Table 6-4 below. Including low income units that are currently in the planning stage, Blythe will have exceeded by 10 units, the three hundred seventy one (371) cumulative housing unit construction needs for low income categories for the current planning period. (See Table 6-4)

Table 6-4
Low Income Housing Built or Planned for 1998-2005

Type Of Unit	Built & Under Construction	Total Planned	Total of Units Built or Planned
Multi-family	220	0	220
Single family	12	40	52
Mobile home***	109 ^{xv}	0	109
Totals	341	40	381

*** All units in this category are attributable to a 109 Unit Mobile Home Park. The complete infrastructure for this park was completed in 2001. Since these spaces are available for lease at affordable rates (see footnote above) each space was counted as a housing unit even though most spaces have yet to be leased.

Furthermore, the City of Blythe has also made considerable progress toward meeting its overall housing need. Four hundred sixteen (416) units have been built since 1998. Including units that are currently in the planning or construction stage, Blythe will have met five hundred fifty-two (633) of the eight hundred fifty three (853) units that constitute its cumulative construction need for the current planning period. (See Table 6-5) As an aside, the eight hundred fifty three (853) unit total is unrealistically high, a figure closer to seven hundred one (701) is more feasible. HCD concurs with this lower number, although the City of Blythe has not opted to have it adopted.

**Table 6-5
Total Units Built or Planned for 1998-2005**

	Built or Under-Construction	Planned	Total Built & Planned
Single family	149	108	257
Mobile home	43	109	152
Duplex	4	0	4
Multi-family	220	0	220
Total New Construction	416	217	633

E. RDA Funding For Housing Rehabilitation

Since 2001, the Blythe RDA has contributed \$87,740 as a local match for a Riverside County EDA Program-the Housing Improvement Program (HIP) that rehabilitates homes owned and occupied by low income households within the City of Blythe. This has leveraged \$113,620 in Riverside County funds and has resulted in the rehabilitation of 11 homes. (Note, this includes several home that are currently in the process of being rehabilitated.)

The County has also spent \$142,672 on the rehabilitation of (twelve) 12 additional homes in the City without assistance from the Blythe RDA. Hence, the RDA's contribution of \$87,740 has in effect leveraged \$201,360 in spending by the county on a total of 23 homes. Furthermore, the County has absorbed the entire administrative cost of administering the program, including determining eligibility, defining the scope of work and verifying completion of the work.

Until recently, the County was in a position to fund 100% of the cost of housing rehabilitation project up to a maximum of \$15,000 per home; RDA funds to supplement such project being necessary only for projects in excess of this amount. However, County CBDG funding that had been utilized to fund projects became largely depleted. As a result, in January 2003 the County was able to commit only \$35,000 to the rehabilitation of seven (7) Blythe residences; the County requested and received a contribution of \$56,412 from the Blythe RDA.

While this was a substantially less favorable match than previously, it did represent '.... roughly one-fifth of the entire CDBG EDA rehabilitation budget for the desert and the Hemet area', according to the County's Economic Development Agency administrator of the program for our area. This administrator anticipated that in fiscal year 2003-2004, the county will have again have substantial funding to spend on this program.

In March of 2003, the Blythe RDA in conjunction with the Desert Alliance for Community Empowerment and the City of Coachella submitted a USDA Housing Preservation Grant (HPG) application. As its share of the required match the RDA committed \$20,000, which would be matched \$1 for \$1 if the grant application is successful. After administrative expenses are subtracted, the City would have a total of \$37,000 to spend on rehabilitation projects. This funding could be utilized as a contribution to future County EDA HIP project; alternatively it could be utilized for any number of

the different type of rehabilitation projects, as long as a licensed contractor was utilized and various other requirement of the HPG are meet.

(Please also refer to Program 11 & 12)

F. Effectiveness of Housing Strategies for 1993-2000.

Previously, this chapter has looked at:

- the achievements of the 1993-1998 planning period and how well these achievements measure up to the goals set for that period; and,
- the achievements of the first part (1998-2000) of the planning period (1998-2005).

The purpose of this sub-section is to reflect on how well these combined accomplishments actually service the specific housing needs of the Blythe community. Hence, this subsection sets the stage for formulating how Blythe as a community can most effectively address its housing needs for the remainder of the 1998-2005 planning period.

Administrative Process and Utilization of Various Programs

Quantitatively many of the previous Element's objectives have been meet or surpassed as already discussed. The flip side of the coin is that the City's efforts have suffered from a lack of administrative coordination and pro-activeness on various evolving housing issues within the Blythe area. In many cases county administered programs have been underutilized and the City has failed to address why such programs are not being more fully utilized. Examples of program under-utilization include:

- several senior home repair programs administered by the Riverside Economic Agency, which after recording a total of fifty seven (57) repairs in 1996-1997, have recorded a grand total of five home repairs since that time. (Please also refer to Programs 11);
- A Riverside County EDA program, which grants low interest loans of up to \$30,000 for home improvements for low and very low income households, was utilized only three times by Blythe residents since 1994. This has recently changed as a result of the networking efforts of the Development Services staff and leverage financing by the Blythe RDA. (Please also refer to Program 12); and
- A Mortgage Certificate Credit Program that can result in sizable tax credits and allow moderate and low income households to qualify for higher loan amounts has been utilized just once since 1994 by Blythe residents. (Please also refer to Program 9)

Omission from the Previous Housing Element

In some cases, it is of little comfort that the goals of the previous planning period have been met, since the Element did not anticipate and/or understated specified needs and therefore set less than appropriate goals. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the following cases where the previous housing element:

- does not specifically address the housing needs of migrant or permanent resident farmworker households in its goals section;
- does not address the specific needs of seniors for various specialized residential care facilities; and,
- grossly underestimates the number of substandard dwelling units and sets an extraordinarily modest goal for rehabilitation thirteen (13) units over five (5) years).

Changing Circumstances:

In other cases, a housing deficiency or constraint has become apparent due to changing circumstances. The best examples of this are:

- the main homeless shelter recently closed leaving the community with just eight (8) beds to serve the homeless;
- the infrastructure constraints associated with Blythe's water supply have become a more critical issue to address; and,
- an economic stagnation in the area which has meant a general lack of economic and/or employment opportunity other than in public service jobs.

Multi-Family Needs Assessment

Quantitative Achievements

By far the most impressive quantitative housing accomplishment is the opening of two hundred twelve (212) subsidized affordable housing units since 1994. Another one hundred eighty eight (188) subsidized units that were opened between 1990 and 1992; three hundred forty one (341) subsidized affordable units have been opened since 1990, compared to a grand total of two hundred eighteen (218) subsidized units before that date, an increase of approximately 160%. During the same time span, the household population of the land within the present Blythe City Limits (which included land annexed into the City after 1990) actually decreased by 3.8% or three hundred twenty (320) persons.

Supply/Demand

Conversations with the managers of several subsidized apartment complexes, indicate that they are experiencing more difficulty filling units. They attribute this to the construction of one hundred thirty nine (139) new subsidized low and very low income units within the last two years.

Furthermore, several older multi-family facilities that are subsidized by Rural Home Administration (RHA) contain a considerable number of unsubsidized apartments, which have a higher than expected rate of vacancy. According to Charlie Boone of RHA, the proper maintenance of these facilities is predicated on a five percent (5%) vacancy rate; in the case of these two facilities, Boone said vacancy rates have been averaging fifteen percent (15%) for several years.

Boone warns that elevated vacancy rates could be a significant problem for newer subsidized apartment complexes as they age and require increasing maintenance. In addition, Boone noted that property managers have little choice but to relax their standards for admitting new tenants, which can result in marginally behaved tenants.

Other Quality of Life Considerations

(Please also refer to Programs 15 and 17)

Most of the subsidized apartment complexes offer a very safe and tranquil quality of life for their occupants. But, there is disturbing evidence in several complexes that problems exist because of anti-social behavior by tenants as well as by non-tenants visiting the apartment complexes. Other quality of life problems associated with a few of these complexes include a lack of upkeep of external and/or internal facilities and a lack of effective screening from adjacent industrial areas. To address these problems the City intends to take a multi faceted approach that includes increased attention to these properties by its code and law enforcement officers, and quality of life committees set up to monitor and take proactive approaches to these problems.

Chapter 7: Housing Goals, Policies, and Programs

Overview for the Planning Period 1998-2005

A. Overall Goals and Strategies for the Current Planning Period

Housing Needs Priorities

The implication of the discussion in the preceding chapter is that pro-active efforts on the part of the City to establish more subsidized rental apartment units is not anticipated to be a priority during the remaining five years of the planning period. The one exception to this is the need for increased specialized multi-family housing for seniors and disabled persons similar to the existing Baldwin complex.

Aside from this exception, the more pressing needs of the community are with regard to various single family and congregate housing needs, including:

- upgrading the large stock of substandard housing including both single family and multi-family structures and substandard motels used for seasonal housing of migrants;
- upgrading the housing options for various special needs groups including farmworkers, the homeless, and seniors;
- to provide enhanced affordable home ownership opportunities particularly for very low income households and the bottom half of the low income group;
- to provide increased affordable market rate housing opportunities and moderate income households; and,
- to increase the supply of market rate housing.

While Blythe is obliged to respond to the housing needs of all income groups, there is little doubt that the most pressing existing needs are among those classified as very low income and/or various special needs groups. The lower half of the low income category (\$23,701-\$31,000 for a family of four) may also be in need.

But anyone above this income level likely has sufficient income to find affordable housing locally, since Blythe's estimated median income is approximately 2/3 of that for the county as a whole. Hence, any four person household with income either a) in the top 40% of the low income bracket or b) in the moderate income bracket, has an income level above Blythe's estimated median income of approximately \$33,000.

RDA Budget

It is the responsibility of the City of Blythe to maximize private and public efforts to provide adequate and affordable housing opportunities to all of its residents regardless of race, religion, sex, marital status, ancestry, national origin, or color. The City must coordinate with County and State agencies to assist in the development of adequate housing to meet the needs of low and moderate income households.

In this regard, the City has the opportunity to facilitate the development of affordable housing by the private sector, through the use of Redevelopment Agency programs, as well as through the facilitated use of other governmental programs. According to City's Redevelopment Agency Five-Year Implementation Plan for 1999-2004, which was prepared in December 1999, its housing set-aside funds totaled an estimated \$1,262,951 in 1999; however, approximately \$360,000 of this fund are the result of bond proceeds. It is estimated that for the period 1999 through 2004, 1.697 million will be expended on projects and programs.

Based on the latest projections of the City of Blythe Finance Department, the total estimated availability of funds to be spent from 1999-2004 is very close to this figure at \$1,581,696. Of this amount approximately \$1.107 million remains to be spent during this period; this figure includes the uncommitted balance (\$707,920) and the RDA estimated combined expenditures for 2002-2003 and 2002-2004.

Funding Priorities

RDA funding priorities include the following:

- \$50,000 to perform a market analysis and feasibility studies as a key data point for formulating a coherent housing policy that is inclusive of the need to reverse the area's economic stagnation, particularly in the core areas of the City;
- \$400,000 leveraged for programs to revitalize the downtown via the development of mixed use development in the downtown and the encouragement of infill development throughout the central core of the City ;
- \$400,000 as leverage for the rehabilitation of existing single family or multi-family housing units. (See program);
- \$100,000 as leverage toward innovative code enforcement initiatives which:
 - a) complement housing rehabilitation initiatives.
 - b) serve as a preventative measure to effect long range conservation of neighborhood dwelling units that might become deteriorated, vacant and/or sub-standard.
- the use of \$100,000 in RDA Low and Moderate Income Set Aside funds as an additional

leverage to encourage senior housing.

- the use of a Blythe RDA parcel (purchased for an affordable housing project that never materialized; see p. 75) as leverage to entice home developers to build senior independent living quarters. The RDA paid \$195,000 for the parcel several years ago.
- \$100,000 as a leverage for the construction of future homeless or other special needs facility such as for the mentally disabled etc.

B. Specific Goals, Policies and Programs for the Current Planning Period

Based on the priorities identified above, the following goals, policies, and programs have been adopted in an attempt to meet the City's official regional housing needs for the remainder of the planning period of January 1, 1998 through 2005. In addition, various special needs priorities-such as an emergency homeless shelter- have been identified that do not count toward the official construction need numbers identified for Blythe.

These programs are intended to be consistent with:

- the uses intended for the City Redevelopment Agency's Moderate and Low Income Set Aside Funds; and,
- with the emerging update of other elements of the City of Blythe General Plan that the City Council intends to adopt.

In many cases the housing programs overlap the various groups served. For example, Granny Flats are applicable to seniors, to overcrowded households and to farmworker households which tend to be multi-generational and are often overcrowded. Cross references will be found in such cases.

Goal I: Overall Housing Production

To provide housing to meet the present and future needs of residents in the City of Blythe and to aim at providing a fair share of the area housing needs, within identified governmental, market, economic and natural constraints.

Policy IA

On a city-wide basis, attempts to increase the number of housing units to meet the need for additional housing during the 1998-2005 period. Blythe's quantified objective is based on the Housing Community Development/Southern California Council of Government's (SCAG) determination of Blythe's fair share of housing by income group as illustrated in Table 7-1.

Table 7-1
City of Blythe Quantified Objective for 1998-2005

	Total Number of Units	Very Low income units	Low income Units	Moderate Income units	Above Moderate Income units.
New	782	200	100	166	316
Rehabilitation	125	75	50	0	0
Conservation	15	10	5	0	0

Program 1: Water Infrastructure Capital Improvements

Action: Expand both the City 's potable water generating capacity and its potable water distribution system.

Objectives:

- 1) To increase the water generating capacity to meet Blythe's long term housing expansion needs.
- 2) To take a major incremental step toward providing an adequate supply of potable water to residences of the Riviera Drive area.

Responsible Department: Public Works

Financing:

- 1) \$6.7 million from the State Revolving Loan Fund, which has been approved for infrastructure improvements designed to increase potable water generating capacity and to take incremental steps towards fully implementing the City 's long term water master plan. \$1 million of this is in the form of a grant and the other \$5.7 million is in the form of a zero interest loan with a 25 year payback period. Financing of the loan will occur via increasing water account fees by an average of \$4.57 per month per user.
- 2) A \$200,000 grant from the North American Development Bank to do feasibility study on the proposed project to increase the City 's water generating infrastructure and to take incremental steps toward completing its long range water master plan.
- 3) \$500,000 from Riverside County CBDG funds and 100,000 from City of Blythe CBDG funds to extend a sixteen (16) inch water main east from the El Rancho Estates Mobile Home Park, (on East Hobsonway) east to Blue Ridge Rd. (in close proximity to the Colorado River.)

Time Frame:

- 1) Pipeline Extension to Blue Ridge Drive completed in 2002.
- 2) Mid 2005 for the water generating improvement

Program 2: Sanitary Sewer Line Extension

Action: Extension of the sanitary sewer to the golf course/new community college campus area.
Objective: To facilitate long term residential and quasi public development in this area.

Responsible Department: Public Works

Financing: Bond financing and Palo Verde Community College Funds.

Time Frame: 2001 completion; Note: The extension to the college has been completed.

Program 3: Zoning Changes

Action: As a part of the update of the other elements of the General Plan, make changes to existing zoning ordinance regulations to assure that they are consistent both with other elements of the General Plan and with the construction needs identified herein. Examples of zoning changes that will be made include:

- The addition of a granny flat provision that assures that unreasonable regulatory hurdles do not obstruct the ability of residents to build second units for seniors 62 and over.
- A refinement of curb gutter, sidewalk and driveway paving requirements to assure that they are not required in outlying locations where their value is marginal.
- Changes in the provisions regarding the number of unrelated persons living in the same house to assure that these provisions comply with the appropriate Fair Housing Law.
- Pursuant to recent changes in state mandates, by January 2004 the City will adopt:

A) An ordinance that allows a 25% density bonus for housing project housing projects that encompass sufficient percentage of low, very low income and/or senior units as defined by these mandates. This ordinance would also state that projects qualifying for the density bonus would receive 'other incentives or concessions' from the City that would facilitate the production of lower income housing units within the development.

Note: The determination of the incentives to be applied is flexible and is to be based on a case by case evaluation of each eligible project. Such incentives could include 'approval of mixed use zoning in conjunction with the housing

projects if commercial, industrial or other land uses will reduce the cost of the housing development.'(California Government Code Section 69615.j(2).

B) Two ordinances that reflect recent changes in state mandates with regard to the permitting of second units and mobile home parks.

- To evaluate present zoning restrictions on group homes to ascertain if they are too restrictive.
- Consider a zone change for a City owned property adjacent to the Emergency Homeless Shelter in order to facilitate the use of this property as a site for a transitional and/or permanent housing site for homeless persons. (see also Program 24)

Objective: To assure that no unnecessary zoning constraints will impede reaching the housing goals identified in this chapter.

Responsible Department: Development Services

Financing: General Fund

Time Frame: Upon adoption of the City 's Comprehensive General Plan and complementary zoning ordinance by the Blythe City Council, which is expected to occur by January 2005.

Program 4: Infill Land Use Inventory

Action: Undertake an inventory of vacant infill lots within the core of the City 's built environment that identifies:

- potential infill areas;
- the appropriate types and quantity of residential and/or mixed used development that could occur in each of these infill areas; and,
- the infrastructure investment costs necessary to effect such development.

Objective: To encourage residential development- and particularly low and moderate housing development- to be contained within the built environment of the Blythe urban core and to thereby discourage development sprawl.

Responsible Department: Development Services

Financing: General Fund and/or RDA funds

Time Frame: January 2004 for the inventory

Goal II: Housing Affordability

To facilitate the development of programs that will provide quality housing for those who otherwise would have difficulty affording such housing at market rates. Specifically, such programs will be directed at low and particularly very low income groups.

Policy IIA

To increase the quality of home ownership options among low and very low income households, especially among overcrowded households.

Program 6: Single Family Self Help Home Development Program Expansion

Action: Facilitate the expansion of the highly successful self-help programs for low and very low income households.

Objective: To have an annual construction of 15 self help homes within the City.

Responsible Department: COB Development Services & Blythe RDA

Financing:

- 1) Leverage RDA funds and the waiving of a portion of development fees to lower the per unit cost of producing a self-help unit.
- 2) Explore various other financing options that would heighten the City 's match including various funding sources for farmworker housing.

Program 7: Rehabilitation of "Fixer Up Homes" by Low and Very Low Income Persons

Action: Find funding mechanisms to use for the purchase and rehabilitation of relatively inexpensive fixer up homes by low and very low income families.

Objective: To conserve/rehabilitate 20 homes annually for low income families.

Responsible Department: Development Services & RDA

Financing:

- 1) Leverage RDA money against other sources of funding such as that provided by CHAFA's HELP loan program.
- 2) Follow up with Chuckawalla Valley and Ironwood State Prisons, which have expressed an eagerness to explore the possibility of training inmates in the rehabilitation of homes.

Time Frame: Continuous

Program 8: Mobile Homes Park Upgrade

Action: To find funding mechanisms to use for the purchase of new (or newer) mobile homes to replace older mobile homes that are in substandard condition.

Objective: To replace 10 substandard low and very low income mobile homes annually with modern mobile homes that meet all code requirements.

Responsible Department: Development Services

Financing: Grant application when funding available for HCD Mobile Park Resident Ownership Program (MRROP).

Time Frame: Continuous.

Program 9: Various Mortgage Assistance Programs

Action: To analyze and update various existing programs for moderate and low income home buyers that include Mortgage Credit Certificate Programs, First Time Home Buyer and various other existing assistance programs. As a follow up to Housing Market Study that is currently being undertaken, the City will update the guidelines for these programs

Objective: To assure that these programs are receiving the maximum utilization by moderate and low income residents of Blythe.

Responsible Department: Development Services

Financing: Blythe RDA

Time Frame: January 2004

Program 10: Encourage Energy Conservation (See also Program 13)

Action: A) Enforce state laws requiring that all new (non-mobile home) housing units are built in compliance with the new requirement of Title 25 which assure much greater energy efficiency.

B) Explore various methods of creating incentives and/ requirements to build energy efficient low income housing. Such methods could include: (1) adopting building codes and landscape ordinances that promote energy efficiency, (2) reducing certain development costs for those programs that have been designed to maximize energy efficiency in low income homes and (3) exploring grant opportunities for sustainable low income housing.

C) As an outgrowth of the First Housing Summit the establishment of an energy conservation committee to facilitate this program.

Objective: To assure that utility bills-particularly those for cooling of new units- will be affordable to lower income persons.

Responsible Department: Development Services

Financing: General Fund for staff time

Time Frame: Continuous

Policy IIB

To promote a substantive upgrade of the City 's large inventory of substandard housing for the purpose of providing quality housing for low income and very low income persons. (See also Program 7 relating to sales financing for homes needing extensive rehabilitation.)

Program 11: Senior Home Repair

Action I: Increase participation in the \$3,000 one time only senior home program run by the Riverside County Economic Development Agency (EDA). This program provides emergency and minor repairs to address health and safety concerns that include improvements for handicapped accessibility, repairs to plumbing, electricity, heating, cooling and ventilation systems, and roof repairs. The home to be repaired must be owned and occupied by a very low income senior citizen (over 62) or a disabled person, who owns and lives in the home to be repaired.

Action II: To support effort of a new formed 'Senior Needs Committee' (recently formed as a result of input at the last Housing Summit) and volunteer 'Brighten Blythe' Programs to facilitate rehabilitation of the homes of low income seniors.

Objective: To rehabilitate approximately 10 homes annually, a modest goal compared to the number of homes that were rehabilitated when EDA administered its senior rehabilitation programs through the Colorado River Action Council.

Responsible Department: Development Services, Blythe RDA, Riverside EDA

Financing: EDA with the possibility of some matches from the City's RDA for repairs that exceed the EDA limits for these programs. Also, consideration of RDA contributions to volunteer program such as Brighton Blythe. The Blythe RDA in conjunction with the City of Coachella and DACE is currently in the process of making application to the USDA for a Housing Preservation grant that would provide funding that could be utilized for such rehabilitation programs.

Time Frame: Continuous.

Program 12: Home Improvement Program (HIP) and Housing Preservation Grant (HPG)

Action: To continue to provide funds to leverage the rehabilitation of low income and owner occupied homes through the Riverside County EDA's HIP. If a pending grant application for HPG program funding (through USDA) is successful, then the City will have the flexibility to utilize these funds in the HIP program and/or to leverage them for other low income housing rehabilitation programs. (See Chapter 6, Section E)

Objective: To see the program increase to an average of 12 rehabilitations annually of homes owned and occupied by to low and very low income households in the City of Blythe.

Responsible Dept: Development Services

Financing: Riverside County EDA, Blythe RDA, USDA

Time Frame: Continuous as long as the HIP program is in existence

Program 13: Weatherization Programs (See also Program 10)

Action:1) Inventory of older low income dwelling units to ascertain how many would benefit from various utility energy efficiency incentive programs.

2) Network with utility companies in order to track the number of houses that are currently utilizing weatherization programs and if there are programs that are being underutilized; then employ strategies to increase such participation.

3) As an outgrowth of the first Housing Summit, the establishment of an Energy Conservation Committee to facilitate increased participation.

Objective: Either in conjunction with rehabilitation or separately, to have the existing weatherization programs of the local electric and gas utility companies more fully utilized.

Responsible Department: Development Services

Financing: Limited financing from Blythe RDA.

Time Frame: 2002-2003 for inventory and ongoing for promoting the energy conservation programs.

Program 14: Code Enforcement of Substandard Rental Units

Action: To identify and deal with the numerous substandard apartments as well as low rent motels that are used in part for seasonal occupancy (mainly migrant farmworkers) and long term residence. The intent would be to work with the owners to bring these properties up to code. In many cases this would be limited to simple enforcement action; in other cases there may be a need to find creative means to help finance such improvements.

Objective: To bring up to code, a minimum of 12 units annually between 2002 and 2005.

Responsible Department: Development Services

Financing: The City will apply for HCD grant money specifically targeted toward code enforcement.

Time Frame: Continuous

Program 15: Monitoring of Subsidized Housing Units

Action: Monitor the publicly subsidized projects to assure they are being managed and maintained in a proper manner that a) promotes safety and well being and b) that is in compliance with all City codes, including landscape requirements and standard building codes.

Objective I: Identify any problems at such properties; work with the managers of these properties to assure that a healthy physical and sociological environment exists.

Responsible Department: Development Services

Financing: General Fund for staff time.

Time Frame: Continuous

Program 16: Promoting Infrastructure Improvements in Established Urban Neighborhoods

Action: (1) To establish an inventory of unpaved streets and other infrastructure constraints including a lack of curb, gutter and sidewalks within the urban core where extensive development has already occurred.

(2) Establish an interdepartmental committee to determine the steps necessary to allow for specific infrastructure improvement on specific streets. (In some cases this may involve legal expenses associated with non-dedicated rights of way.)

Objective: Within five years to have upgraded the infrastructure of 6 residential blocks and within 10 years to have upgraded the infrastructure of 12 residential blocks.

Responsible Department: Public Works and Development Services Departments

Financing: Blythe RDA as leverage for other funding.

Time Frame: 2002-2005

Program 17: Screening of Public Owned Industrial Properties Adjacent to a Low and Moderate Income Residential Areas

Action: To establish a committee composed primarily of City, county, state and Palo Verde Irrigation District representatives to address the visual impairment caused by a lack of screening of industrial areas operated by these agencies. This lack of screening seriously impacts the quality of life of adjacent residential neighborhoods composed of low and moderate income housing. The committee's task would be to prepare a strategy to remedy this situation on all of these properties in a cost effective and timely manner.

Objective: To improve the visual quality of industrial areas adjacent to low moderate income areas and thereby to have a positive quality of life impact on these neighborhoods.

Responsible Department: Public Works And Development Services.

Financing: Blythe RDA funding as leverage for other financing from various governmental sources.

Time Frame: To have these areas effectively screened by 2005.

Goal III: Increase Senior Specialized Housing/Service Needs

Policy IIIA

To meet the various housing and related service needs of very low income seniors at a local level. (See also Program 3, which address the need for a granny flat ordinance.)

Program 18: Additional Senior Multi-family Housing

Action: To provide additional senior multi-family housing similar to the locally based Baldwin Apartments for very low income persons preferably in a location close to the center of town.^{xxvi}

Objective: To increase senior multi-family housing from the present 39 units to between 80-120 units.

Responsible Department: Development Services.

Financing: Leverage the City owned property on Seventh Street as an incentive for senior multi-family unit developers.

Time Frame: To double senior multi-family by 2005 and to increase the total number of such units to 120 within a decade.

Program 19: Increase The Skilled Nursing Facility Capacity

Action: To increase the number of beds in skilled nursing.

Objective: To curtail the need for local seniors to utilize skilled nursing facilities outside the area.

Responsible Department: Development Services

Financing: RDA funding utilized to leverage Riverside County Office on Aging funding

Time Frame: Increase the number of skilled nursing home beds locally from 33 to between 60-80 over the next decade. (see Chapter, Section B).

Program 20: Related Transportation Services

Action: Coordinate with the transit authority to assure that the public transportation needs of seniors are adequately met. This includes assuring that a recently announced program to transport veterans by public transportation to medical facilities in Coachella Valley and Inland Empire will also be available to senior at a nominal charge.

Objective: Assure that seniors have adequate access to needed medical services, shopping and other amenities from their residences.

Responsible Department: Development Services and the local transit authority.

Financing: General Fund and Transit Agency funding for staff time.

Time Frame: 2002-2004 to establish such program and continue its operation thereafter.

Goal IV: Farmworker Housing

Policy IVA

To address the problem of large numbers of farmworker households that are living in either sub-standard or overcrowded households. The intent is to address housing issues both for farmworker families who make their permanent residence in the area, and for migrant farmworkers who are not permanent residents of the area.

Program 21: Increase Home Ownership Among Farmworkers

Action: Facilitate the expansion of the Sweat Equity homeownership opportunities and of various other types of financing for farmworker households (see Goal II)

Objective: To increase the opportunities for farmworker families to become homeowners.

Responsible Department: Development Services

Financing: Blythe RDA funding as leverage for state and federal funding obtained by developer such as the Coachella Valley Housing Coalition (CVHC) and Rancho Housing Alliance.

Time Frame: The on-going City goal is to facilitate five farmworker families annually achieving home ownership.

Program 22: Migrant Worker Housing Code Enforcement

Action- Initiate aggressive code enforcement action on sub-standard motels and apartments where migrants are known to reside.

Objective: To minimize the number of migrant workers that are housed in sub-standard, unhealthy and/or unsafe conditions.

Responsible Department: Development Services

Financing: Seek HCD code enforcement grant money leveraged with RDA funds.

Time Frame: To bring all substandard hotels and apartments into compliance within the next decade.

Goal V: Homeless Continuum of Care Programs

Policy VA

Increase the supply and diversity of shelter options for the homeless.

Program 23: Re-establish a Homeless Emergency Care Facility

Action: Establish a supervised emergency shelter run by the Richard Allen Community Services with a particular emphasis on servicing homeless men.

Objectives: To establish a 24 bed facility. Four of the beds in this facility, which are in a separate wing from the other beds are dedicated exclusively for woman.

Responsible Department: Development Services and Richard Allen Foundation

Financing: Leverage CBDG funds and the \$1 a year use of Blythe RDA land to obtain financing from other sources including the Emergency Housing Assistance Program (EHAP). Funding for both operations and construction has recently been obtained

Time Frame: Facility expected to open by October 2005.

Note: Under this plan, upon implementation of the 24 bed facility, the existing RACS existing 8 bed facility would be used as emergency shelter for homeless families and women. Also, as noted in Chapter IV the site has been architecturally master planned to provide for a second building of identical size to house women if and when the demand arises.

Program 24: Establish Transitional and Permanent Housing

Action: (1) Identify a local non-profit agency to administer homeless transitional housing and network with the appropriate agencies to secure the funding to establish the facility.

(2) Consider the utilization of a recently acquired City owned parcel adjacent to a soon to be constructed emergency shelter on S. Main as the site for a transitional shelter. (See also Program 3, identifying the need for a zone change to facilitate this use.)

(3) On a somewhat longer time horizon, network with appropriate agencies to facilitate permanent housing opportunity for the permanently physically or mentally disabled.

Objective: To establish a 20 bed facility

Responsible Department: Development Services

Financing: Seek grant money including HUD Super Nova grant money specifically targeted for the establishment of transitional shelters; leverage the use of COB land for the facility, CBDG funds and RDA funds.

Time Frame: 2005 for Transitional Housing; 2007 to Permanent Housing.

Program 25: Case Worker Management

Action: Network with RACS and other homeless service providers to assure that a caseworker management system is put in place as part of the local effort to establish a comprehensive Homeless Continuum of Care process.

Objective: To facilitate the optimal benefits for human growth of homeless persons serviced by homeless facilities in the Blythe area

Responsible Department: Development Services and homeless care providers.

Financing: EHAP And HUD Super Nova grant money potentially leveraged against various sources of local cash or in kind contribution from COB, RDA and various local non-profits.

Time Frame: 2004

Policy VB

Take preventive measure to decrease the supply of families facing homelessness due to the threat of eviction.

Program 26: Expanded Emergency Rental Assistance

Action: Seek funding to provide rental assistance to families identified by the local office of Inland Counties Legal Aid as facing eviction because they are behind on their rent.

Objective: To maintain 5-10 families per month in their homes that would otherwise be facing potential homelessness.

Responsible Department: Development Services.

Financing: FEMA rental assistance and EHAP operations grants

Time Frame: Continuous

Goal VI: Drug And Alcohol Rehabilitation Programs

Policy VA

Expand the opportunities for various types of residential recovery housing options available in the Blythe area. (See also zoning changes addressed in Program III to assure that zoning restrictions on group homes are not too restrictive.)

Program 27: Expand Rehabilitation Services for Men and Women

Action: To work with service providers to facilitate the establishment of a) A transition House for men B) A recovery center for women and C) A transition house for women.

Objective: To provide rehabilitation services locally such that drug and alcohol dependent persons do not have to leave the area to get most or all of the services needed.

Responsible Department: Development Services

Financing: CBDG and Blythe RDA funds leveraged against other funding sources.

Time Frame: establishment of separate 6 bed transition houses for men and woman by 2005 and a recovery center for woman by 2010.

Goal VII: Fair Housing

To ensure a decent and safe living environments for the City 's residents regardless of age, sex family composition, race, ethnicity, religion, physical or mental disability or income.

Policy VIIA:

The City shall support private and public efforts to ensure non-discrimination in the sale or rental of housing.

Program 28: Undertake Study of Potential Disabilities Constraints

Action: A study will be undertaken to analyze and determine whether there are constraints on the development, maintenance and improvement of housing intended for persons with disabilities, consistent with Senate Bill 520 enacted January 1, 2002. The analysis will include an evaluation of existing land use controls, permit and processing procedures and building codes. If any constraints are found in these areas, the City will initiate actions to address these constraints, including removing the constraints *and* providing reasonable accommodation from housing intended for persons with disabilities.

Responsible Department: Development Services Department

Financing: Non-required; study to be performed in-house.

Time Frame: The City will conduct an evaluation by January 2003 and if any constraints are found, the City will take subsequent actions within six months of the completion of the evaluation.

Program 29: Support and Enforce Anti-Discrimination Programs

Action: Support and enforce fair housing laws and policies by providing information, counseling, and investigation services concerning discrimination complaints; identify non-profit or public organizations to carry out this role locally. This will be facilitated by forming a Fair Housing Committee to initiate pro-active recommendations for the City to undertake.

Objective: To eliminate discrimination in housing, particularly important in Blythe in which half or more of the population is minority. Distribute brochures at locations easily accessed by the General Public and in particular by minority groups and seniors. Refer complaints to appropriate state and federal agencies. Provide lists of tenant advocacy organizations in Spanish and English on the community cable channel and in local newspaper.

Responsible Department: Development Services

Financing: CBCG and RDA funds.

Time Frame: Continuous; Fair Housing Committee to be formed and activated in calendar year 2003.

Goal VII: Public Input and Program Implementation

Policy VIIA

To establish a process of comprehensive public input for the purpose of:

- *obtaining data relevant to local housing issues;*
- *formulating the most relevant housing goals; and,*
- *networking innovative programs to implement such goals.*

Program 30: Homeless Continuum of Care

Action: To continue the Homeless Continuum of Care process. (See Chapter 5)

Objective: To mobilize non-profit care providers and concerned citizens in an effort to establish a comprehensive strategy for dealing with the full range of homeless issues. (See Goal V)

Responsible Department: Development Services, Riverside County Social Services.

Financing: From the annual appropriation of the Development Services Department

Time Frame: Immediate and ongoing.

Program 31: Housing Summit

Action: Analogous to the Homeless Continuum of Care process, initiate a housing summit in order to network with the public at large, special interest groups and their service providers, governmental officials and developers, lenders, Realtors etc. to formulate grassroots strategies on how best to address the housing goals identified in this chapter.

Objective: To provide a forum to identify specific strategies for attacking the various housing problems identified in this document; as an outgrowth of this forum to encourage the formation of communities to address specific housing issues. This could include: Senior Housing/Services Committee, A Housing Rehabilitation Committee, A Low Income Home Ownership Committee, A Farmworker Housing Committee, A Code Enforcement Committee and a Grant Writing Committee

Responsible Department: Development Services

Financing: Staff time

Time Frame: Original Summit occurred in Spring 2001 with follow-up approximately every three months. A committee to address Senior Home Repair was recently initiated.

Policy VIIB

To establish effective institutional procedures to ensure the effective coordination and implementation of the housing element goals. This would include adopting processes that ensure: funding is procured, programs are effectively promoted and monitored and effective coordination is maintained between all institutional bodies in the effort to address Blythe's housing needs.

Program 33: Process for Planning uses of Blythe RDA Low-Moderate Income Funds

Action: Establishment of a planning process that directly links the Planning Department with the Blythe Redevelopment Agency board for the purpose of planning how LMIHF will be spent in conformity with HCD guidelines that ... "the housing element should estimate the amount of funds expected to accrue to the LMIHF over the planning period of the element and describe the planned uses for those funds...." and that "for each program in the housing element that lists the Redevelopment Agency as the responsible agency for implementation, also include the amount of redevelopment funds allocated or planned to be allocated to that program."

Objective: 1) To facilitate a better coordination of how LMIHF funds are spent in conformity with Health and Safety Code Section 33334.4 which requires each redevelopment agency to "expend, over the duration of the redevelopment plan, the monies in the low and moderate income housing fund to assist housing for persons of low and very low income in at least the same proportion as the total number of housing units needed for those income groups."

Responsible Department: Development Services and RDA.

Time Frame-Continuous.

Program 34: Monitoring & Incremental Corrections Re-evaluation

Action I: Develop a record-keeping system to collect statistics relating to the quantified achievements of the housing element.

Action II: Develop a formal (e.g. questionnaire) and informal methodology (e.g. on- site discussion with housing service providers) to evaluate how well the qualitative and quantitative goals of the housing element are actually meeting the specific housing needs of the community.

Action III: Request an update from Bayfield Apartments to assure their commitment to voluntarily maintaining rents for those households that were living in income restricted units as of August 10, 2001.

Action IV: Evaluate the current inventory of land available for multi-family development identified in Table 5-5 to ascertain if sufficient land remains available for multi-family uses in order to

satisfy the City's need for low-income multi-family apartment complexes. If it is determined that insufficient land is available owing to alternative residential uses of such land, then the City will undertake to identify additional properties available for multi-family development.

Objectives: 1) Monitor progress on a yearly basis to evaluate if housing element target goals are on track.

2) To ascertain if increased or decreased emphasis should be put on particular programs within a given income group.

Responsible Department: Development Services

Financing: General Fund for staff time.

Time Frame: On a yearly basis to correspond with the July 1 Housing Element Update report that is required for HCD.

x. The only portion of the Blythe Redevelopment Agency areas outside of the Blythe City Limits with a dense concentration of houses occurs on a one half mile stretch of Colorado River Road north of Blythe's City limits and to the immediate south of Mayflower County Park.

Chapter 4

xi. While this is a very small percentage of the estimated 250,000 RV users who flock to the Quartzsite, Arizona/Blythe, California area during the winter months, it may well represent a significant but as yet unquantifiable number of homeless persons.

xii. The 1995 City of Blythe Housing Element update reported that *God Garden Growth Center* had 35 beds available for up to 3 days at a time. It also reported that for those wishing to commit to a long term rehabilitation, the Center had a six month program available. In retrospect, however, it is clear that the plan for this church sponsored center never materialized.

xiii. These figures are for Census Tracts 460, 461 and 462; the vast majority of the total population encompassed by these tracts is contained within the present city limits of Blythe.

xiv. The Riverside Office on Aging, has identified the lack of public transportation to access medical facilities outside the local area as one of the greatest unmet needs of the elderly.

xv. The Discharge Planner for Palo Verde Hospital noted that of those requiring skilled nursing care facilities, approximately one-half would need level IV certified nursing facilities, which provide an even higher level of care than the non-certified nursing care facilities.

xvi. The small drop in farm-worker employment in the last decade has been much less dramatic than the drop that occurred in the previous decade from 1980-1990, when many migrant's jobs ceased as a direct result of the curtailment of tomato and lettuce production.

xvii. This includes those staying temporarily in hotels before entering their program.

Chapter 5

xviii. Solar Energy Research Institute, Report on Building a Sustainable Future, April 1981. Fewer than 200 new housing units were built between 1995-1997. Hence, the amount of available land for development was decreased by only a small percentage between the time when the previous housing element was written (1995) and the start of the present planning period (1998).

xix. While the threat of flooding is always a possibility, steps have been taken by the City to assure that new construction is built with a comfortable margin above the 100 year flood level.

xx. This is a one time fee applicable only when: a) building a new home on a non-developed lot or b) building a new home on a lot with an existing dwelling unit on it. (If this dwelling is demolished then the fee would not apply, but if it remains then the fee would be charged).

xxi. See other sections for discussion of pro-active approaches to single family ownership in Blythe.

Chapter 6

xxii. The present planning period began in 1998. However, because there were extensions on the previous planning period it is considered to have run through 1998 in this document. This is consistent with the analysis that was done for the 1995 Housing Element update, which projects housing need through 1998. It is also consistent with feedback from HCD officials who stated that for this housing update it was acceptable to double count 1998, 1999 and 2000 data for the purposes of a) an evaluation of how well the previous planning period's objectives were met and b) to determine how much of the construction need for the present planning period has already been met.

xxiii. RDA contributed \$440,000 to several projects in fiscal year 1998-1999 that opened their doors for occupancy after 1998.

xxiv. Riverside County Adult Protective Services Caseworker.

xxv. These units are for a new mobile home park. With lease space estimated at \$400 a month and the cost of a double wide at \$45,000, the upper income limit of households for whom such units would be affordable is approximately \$30,000. For low income households, this puts such dwelling units: a) comfortably within the range of affordability for a four person household, b) barely within the affordability range of a two person household and c) out of the affordability range for a single person household. It is anticipated that much of the demand for this type of dwelling unit will come from seniors, some of who would be single.

Chapter 7

xxvi. In order for senior to have better access to various amenities, it would be advantageous to have an expanded dial a ride service and/or to locate future senior multi-family housing within walking distance of the city center.